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of Brooks & Dunn

Gavin Harrison
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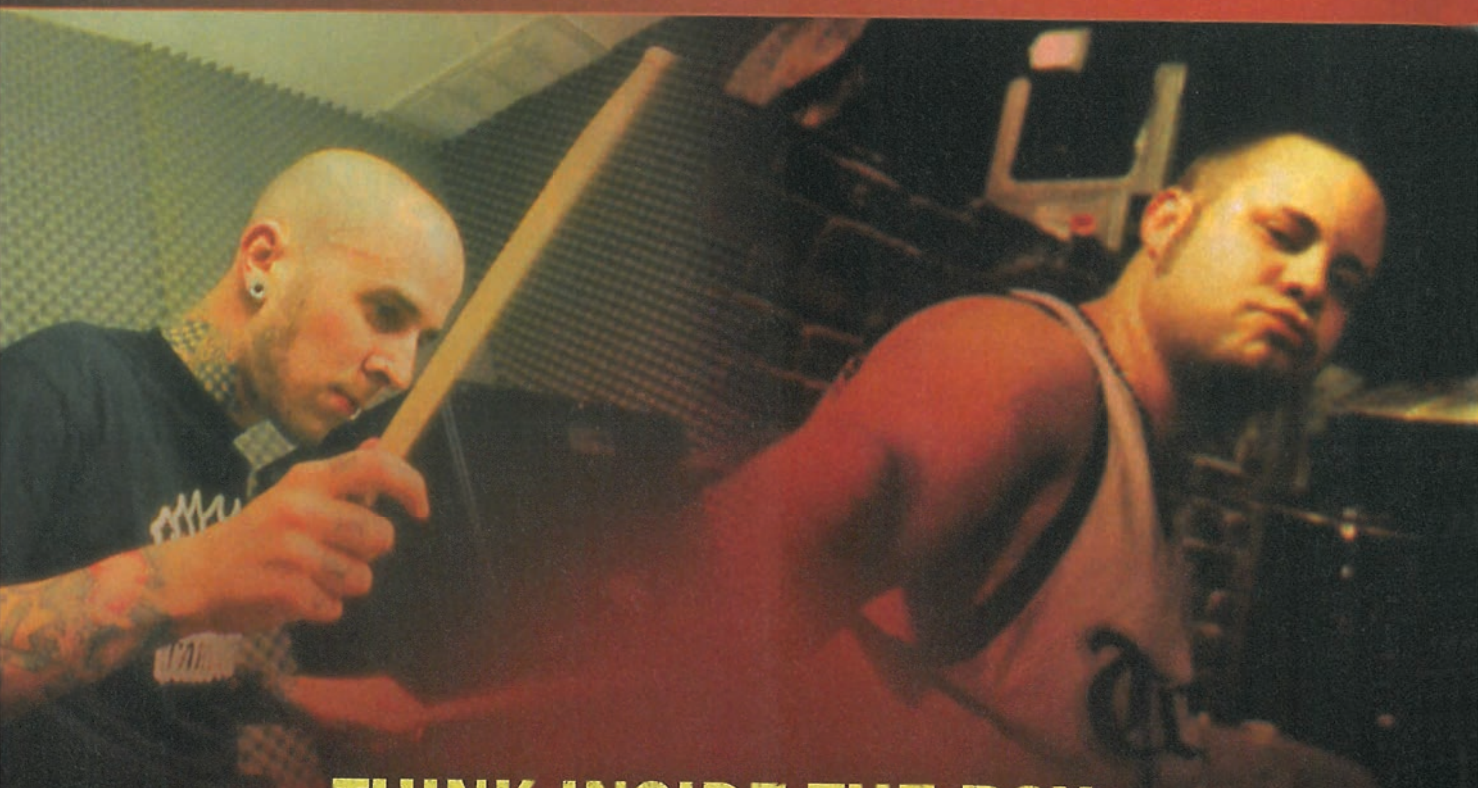

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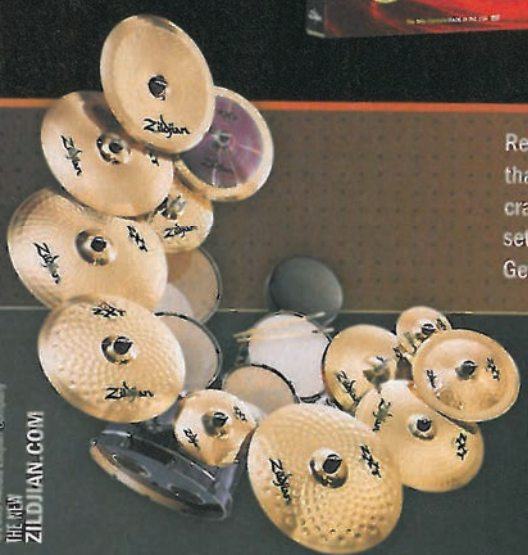

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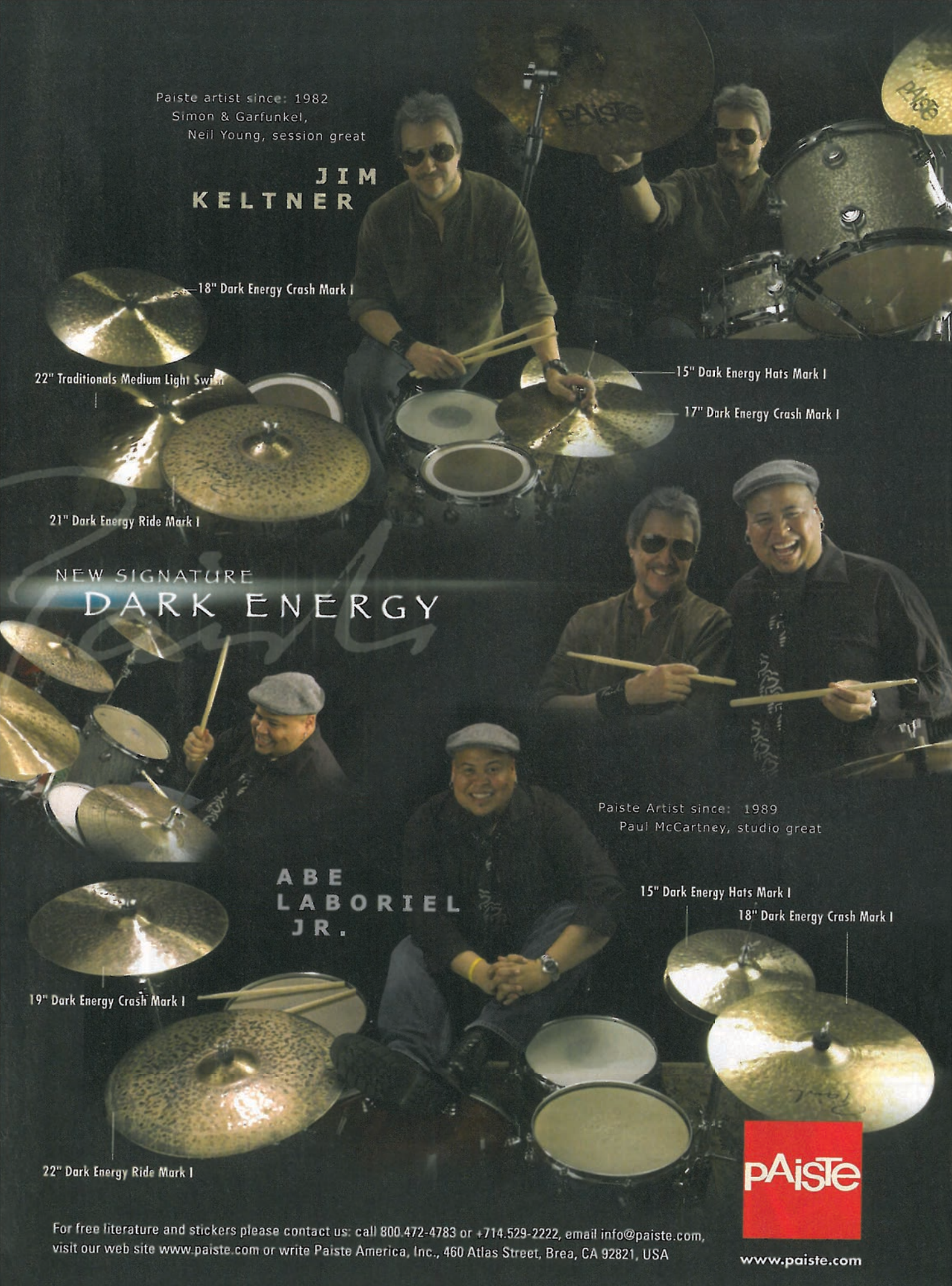
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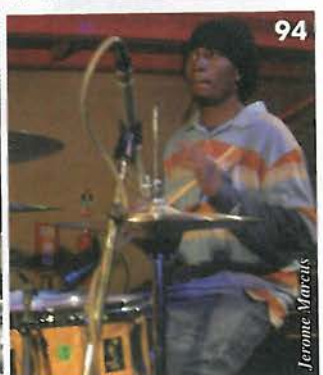

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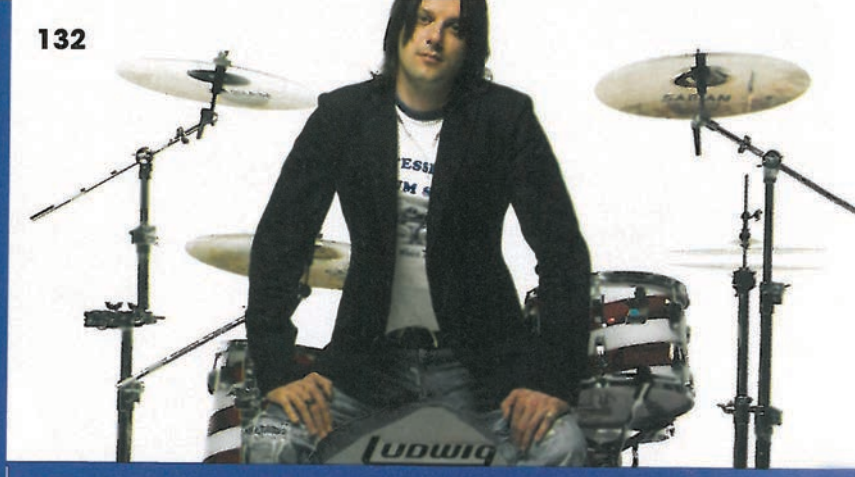

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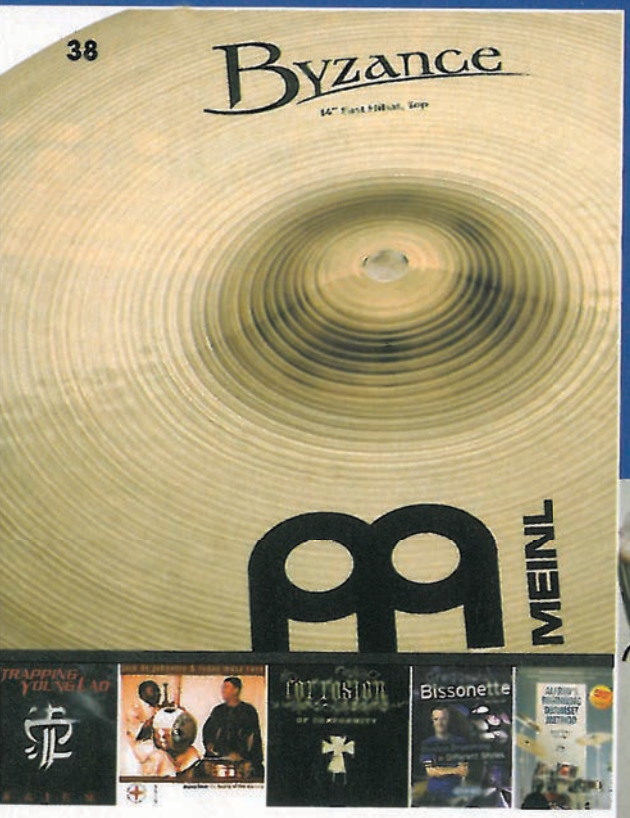

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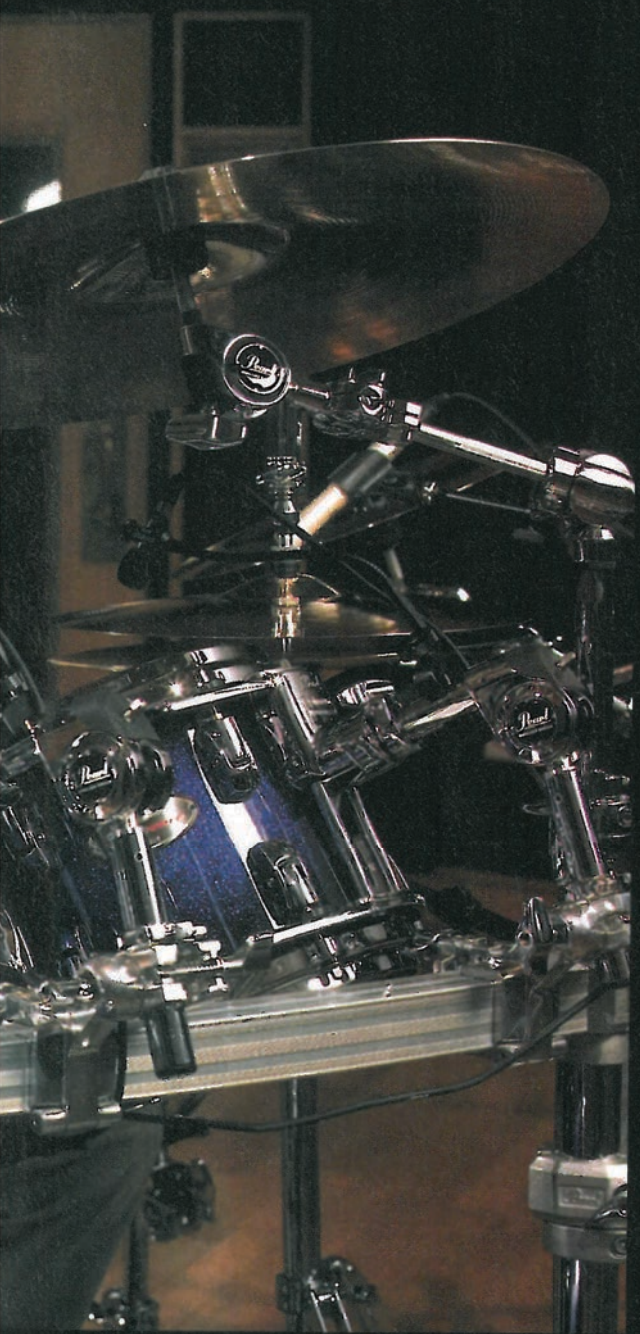

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Discovering Drummers

This issue's *On The Move* department features write-ups on the winners of *MD*'s 2005 Undiscovered Drummer Contest. Elóy Casagrande of Sao Paulo, Brazil took top honors in the eighteen-and-under category, while Jon Willis of Santa Barbara, California was named the over-eighteen winner. *Modern Drummer* congratulates these two talented players.

However, Elóy and Jon are just the tip of a very large iceberg. We received *hundreds* of entries, from all over the globe. It took the *MD* editors several weeks to screen them all. Every submission was viewed and graded, and the elimination process required several rounds. Overall, the level of talent displayed by the entrants was impressive. In many cases, it was downright astounding.

One encouraging trend among the entrants was their youth. Within the over-eighteen category, the vast majority of submissions came from drummers in their twenties. And a significant number of skilled players in the eighteen-and-under category were in their early teens or younger. It's great to see so many young people involving themselves seriously in drumming.

Of course, this abundance of talent made the selection process very difficult. I'm here to tell you, we watched and listened to a *lot* of exceptional drumming. Of course, there were some entrants who just tried to "blow chops," without regard to musicality. But while chops are an important part of drumming, we were most impressed by drummers who demonstrated a balanced combination of technique, musicality, and imagination.

The final round involved over a dozen drummers in each age category. It was the first time in the history of the Undiscovered Drummer Contest that so many contenders made it to the finals. The selection process required quite a bit of viewing and re-viewing by all of *MD*'s editors, along with plenty of heated discussion. But in the end, our choices were unanimous.

All of us at *MD* want to thank everyone who entered the Undiscovered Drummer Contest. Just by making the effort to prepare for, record, and submit your entries, you proved that you are all winners!

MODERN DRUMMER

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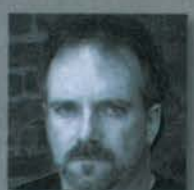

Dave McAfee
"Toby Keith"

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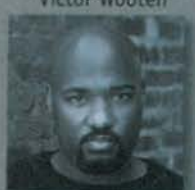

Chad Butler
"Switchfoot"

JJ Johnson
"John Mayer"

Jeremy Colson
"Steve Vai"

Antonio Sanchez

I saw Antonio Sanchez at the 2003 *MD* Festival, and I was completely blown away by his facility, technique, and drumming knowledge. Your May cover story only underscored his intelligence and dedication to his art.

I made a point to pick up Pat Metheny's *The Way Up* and *Speaking Of Now* just to be able to listen to Antonio's playing over and over again. This is one impressive guy!

Fred Williams

Jimmy Chamberlin

Jimmy Chamberlin should have come out of the Smashing Pumpkins era as one of drumming's great superstars. Unfortunate circumstances prevented that from happening. How apt that his new project is titled *Life Begins Again*.

But Jimmy's drumming isn't beginning again. It's picking up right where he left off, with stellar chops and great musical imagination. Jimmy is right back on track toward superstardom. I wish him a smooth road this time.

Alan Anassasa

Ray Mosca

I was glad to see jazz veteran Ray Mosca featured in your May issue. People like Ray deserve more coverage. Your young readers could also benefit from seeing Ray perform. His speed, precision, and finesse didn't happen overnight. Ray embodies all the good characteristics of his idol, Papa Jo Jones—right down to wearing Papa Jo's old Capezio shoes when he plays.

By the way, did you notice that in the inside front-cover Ludwig ad, Butch Miles is wearing Capezios too? Seems Papa Jo started something!

Don Robertson

Kudos To The Bills

Thanks for the overdue feature on Bill Reiflin in your April issue. The eclecticism and musicianship that Bill has displayed over the years has been inspiring to me personally—and, hopefully, to a new legion of musical drummers. Any guy that can beat the hell out of a Ministry track like "Filth Pig" and provide a flawless "nails into the coffin" groove like on Chris Cornell's "Steel Rain" is an example to us all.

Taste and restraint often go unrecognized in the percussive arts. Many drummers are still enamored of thirty-piece kits and those who play 32nd notes around them. Your interview with Bill Rieflin shows once again that nice guys—and great musicians—may finish last, but they still get an insightful twelve pages in which to dish some truth.

Also, a big salute and thanks to Billy Ward for just "being." His *MD* articles, his *Big Time* DVD, and his frank and direct analysis always motivates.

Billy Atwell

Noble & Cooley Review

As a long-time *MD* reader, I believe each *MD* reviewer does his best to be diligent and thorough when testing new products. With that said, I'm sure there are times when finding flaws or issues with a product can be difficult—especially when that product goes above and beyond with its quality.

Giving the Noble & Cooley Anniversary snare drums a "miss" (in the April *Product Close-Up*) on the basis of their throw-off was, to me, disappointing. N&C has been using that unique throw-off design for many years. Is it comparable to a Nickel Drumworks throw-off? No. But then, it was not designed to be. Instead, the N&C snare throw-off is known for its simplistic nature. Give the company some credit. What other drum manufacturer is celebrating 150 years of existence?

Demetrios Kakavas

Gorden Campbell

I find it a little ironic that great Gospel-influenced drummers like Gorden Campbell have to get a high-profile "secular" gig (like Gorden's with pop singer Jessica Simpson) before they can be covered in *Modern Drummer*. But hey, whatever it takes!

Gorden, like many great R&B drummers before him, adds the soul and spirit of the church to the deep groove and solid chops he plays with. It's an explosive combination that *any* artist should be grateful to have at his or her back.

William Arnold

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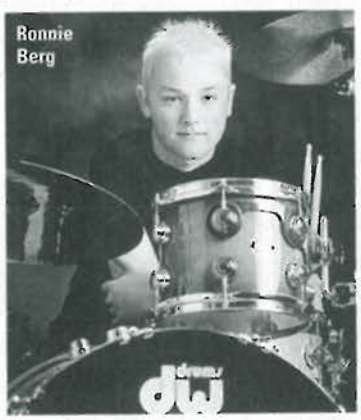
For Ronnie, From Gregg

Hi, *Modern Drummer* readers. I'm here to tell you about an unbelievable drummer and friend of mine named Ronnie Berg.

In 1997 the Make-A-Wish Foundation called me about a fifteen-year-old drummer from Poughkeepsie, New York who had been battling a very rare form of cancer since he was six. Ronnie Berg's wish was to come to LA to hang out with me and play drums together. I was incredibly touched and honored. With tears in my eyes, I told Make-A-Wish to *please* get him out to LA as soon as possible.



Members of the Woodland Hills Drum Club with Ronnie in 1997. From left: Myron Grombacher, Louie Bellson, Simon Phillips, Ronnie, Tris Imboden, Hilary Jones, Gregg Bissonette, and Tony Pia.

A few weeks later, Ronnie arrived with his loving and supportive parents. They came straight to a recording session I was doing at A&M Records in Hollywood. I asked Ronnie to jam on my drums, with my brother Matt on bass. Ronnie had no idea that the engineer was recording him. After the jam, we went into the control room and played it back over the big speakers. Ronnie's grooves, fills, and musicality were awesome. At fifteen he was playing like a seasoned pro. I could hardly believe it—especially since Ronnie had just been through more of the cancer treatments that he had been undergoing for nine years.

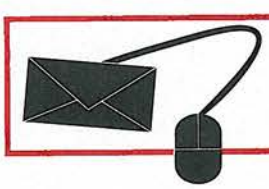
The next day, my wife Sadhna threw a big lunch party together at our house, and I invited some members of the Woodland Hills Drum Club to come over and jam with Ronnie. The group included Simon Phillips, Myron Grombacher, Tris Imboden, Hilary Jones, Tony Pia, Louie Bellson, and myself. Ronnie wore us all out! Everyone was blown away, not only by his drumming, but also by what a completely positive, upbeat, and passionate person he was. He *never* had a negative word to say about his very difficult and painful situation.

Ronnie and I stayed in close contact after that. He and his best friend Rich had a band, and whenever I played anywhere in the New York area, they'd come. Ronnie would sit in and amaze the audience. Due to a side effect of anesthesia during operations to repair a severely broken leg, Ronnie had to use electrical tape to hold together the pinch between his index finger, thumb, and drumstick. Still, never a complaint came out of Ronnie's mouth.

In 2003, Ronnie was able to take some lessons with a few great Los Angeles drummers, including Vinnie Colaiuta, Doane Perry, Myron Grombacher, Gary Novak, and Steve Houghton. He had every intention of paying for each lesson he took, but all of these compassionate drumming heros graciously gave freely of their time, providing Ronnie with an inspirational experience that he would never forget.

Ronnie Berg passed away this past December 3—just one day after his twenty-second birthday. He had been fighting cancer for sixteen years. The close friendship I had with Ronnie will stay with me all of my life. He never took a single day for granted, and the way he lived his life was an example to all of us. I feel blessed that God gave me the opportunity to be Ronnie's friend. I know that he is inspiring lots of drummers up in heaven!

Gregg Bissonette



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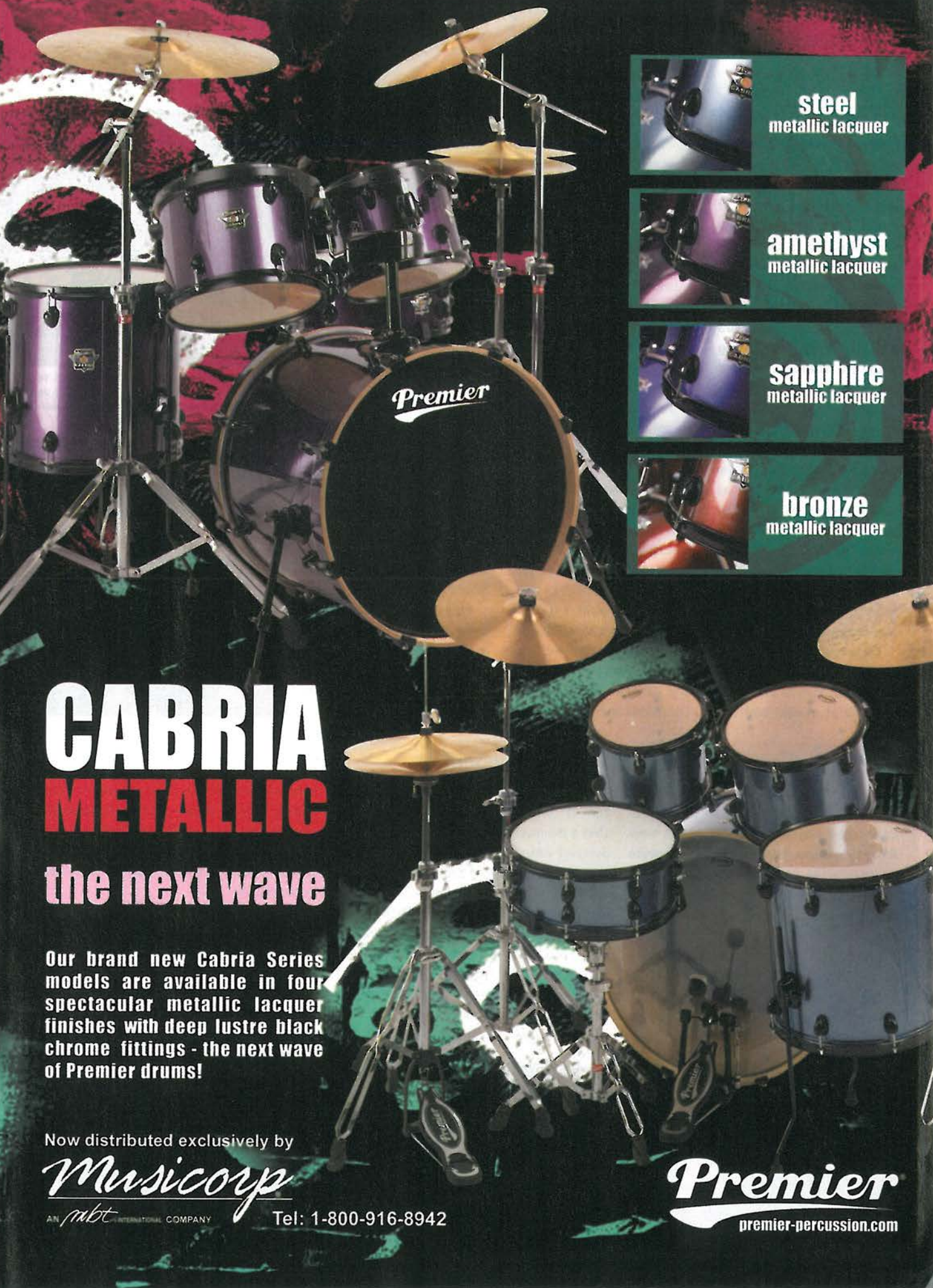
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Drum Racks Versus Separate Stands

I am at the point of what could be a costly decision. Over the years I've accumulated quite a number of stands. I've tried using different multi-clamps and grabber systems to eliminate the clutter and give me more room. But I'm still lugging a lot of hardware. Could you address the subject of using separate stands versus a rack system? Rim

Rack systems generally aren't practical for kits with only four or five drums and only two or three cymbal stands. However, if you have enough items on your kit that individual stands and/or accessory arms are becoming cluttered, hard to position around each other (and the drums), and heavy to carry, a rack might be a wise consideration.

An appropriately sized rack can eliminate virtually all of the tripods and many of the middle sections of cymbal and tom stands, leaving you with only the upper sections to position off of the rack pipes. Rack setups generally take up less of a stage "footprint" than do large combinations of stands, owing to the elimination of tripods. Best of all, a rack system will generally be lighter to transport than the combined weight of all the hardware it replaces.

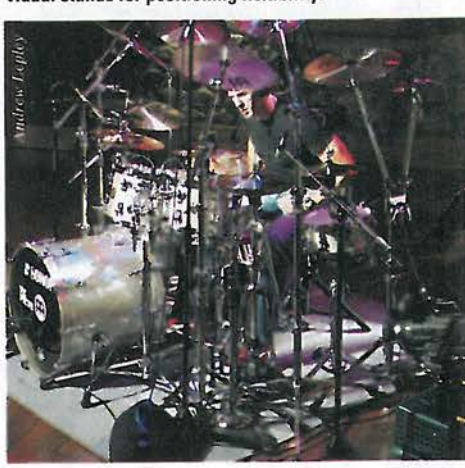
Rack systems also facilitate "same way every time" setups. As long as you place the rack itself in the same position relative to the bass drum, snare stand, throne, and any other items on the floor, you'll always have the same spatial relationship. That sort of consistency is easy to achieve by marking spots for rack legs, bass drum spurs, and pedals on your drum rug.

Metal rack pipes and clamp systems are offered by Gibraltar, Pearl, Tama, Yamaha, and Pacific. Carbon fiber rack tubes are offered by Monolith Composites and Carbonlite, and Carbonlite also offers cymbal boom arms with carbon fiber boom shafts. Carbon fiber components are more expensive than metal versions, but they are much lighter.

The down side of a rack system is a lack of flexibility. With individual stands, you have the option to move things around on the spur of the moment (perhaps due to an unusually shaped stage). You can also choose to take or not take any particular stand (and whatever it holds) with you, depending on the needs of the gig. With a rack, once you have an arrangement created, that's what it is, and it can be difficult to alter quickly. In addition, the initial positioning and adjusting of each item on a complex rack system can take a lot of time and effort.

Basically, the choice between using stands or a rack boils down to how much you value consistency and portability versus spontaneity and flexibility. Only you can make that choice.

Gorden Campbell (above) employs a rack to secure the position of the drums and cymbals on his kit. Thomas Lang (below) prefers to use individual stands for positioning flexibility.



Drum Education On A Budget

Every month in *MD* I read articles about drummers who are playing for successful bands and artists, and 90% of the time those drummers have studied under some professional drummer or at a name school. I'd like to know what drummers like myself should do if we can't afford a teacher or to go to a school. Should we resort to instructional videos? Maybe a CD with some good jazz or blues that we could play along with? What do you recommend? Jeremy White

You've pretty much answered your own question. If "formal" studies are not an option, then a drummer should take advantage of the amazing variety and quantity of educational materials available in book, CD, video, and DVD form. Check the Web sites for Warner Bros. Publications, Hal Leonard Publications, Hudson Music, Carl Fischer Music, Mel Bay, Alfred Publishing, and Meredith Music, among others. In addition, playing along to recorded music has *always* been an important way of developing style and creativity.

Don't forget the option to jam with any experienced musicians in your area. You can learn a lot from players of other instruments, who will tell you what *they* like to hear from a drummer. There's a lot of education to be had without having to pay for private lessons or drum schools.

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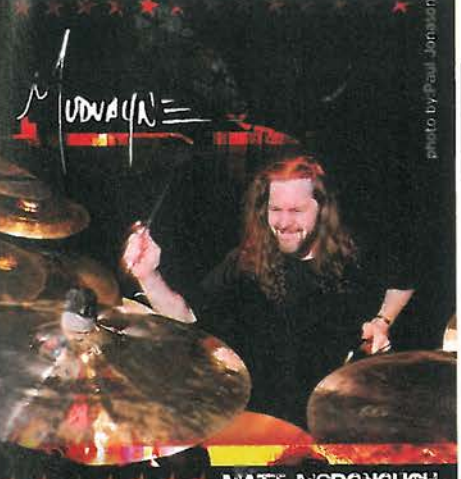

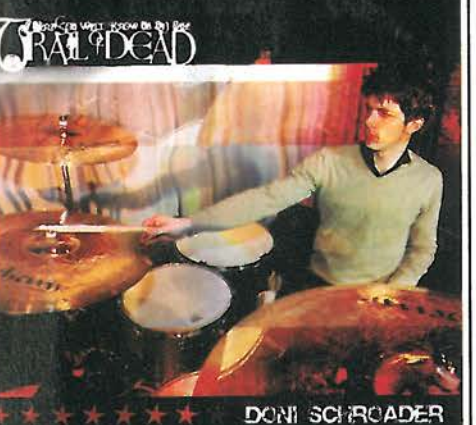

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Vintage Slingerlands

I'm a drummer from Uruguay, and I found these Slingerland drums at a friend's shop. The kit consists of an 18" bass and 12" and 14" toms, all with black & gold badges. I found some information about Slingerland drums on the Internet to help determine the era, model, and material of the drums. Accordingly, I think the kit is a late-1960s Sound King model.

The drums have very thin shells with reinforcement rings, and the interiors of the shells are painted. The exterior wood ply looks like mahogany. Can you tell me more about the shell construction?

The lugs, hoops, and other fittings look like originals. The only pieces that may be replacements are the T-rods on the bass drum batter head, which are different from those on the front head. (See middle photos.)

The sizes and the tone of the drums would work very well for my jazz gigs. So I want to buy the set. But there isn't a vintage drum market in town, and no one is able to give me an approximate value. Please tell me the estimated value in the US.

I'm also trying to find recordings from that era with anybody playing a similar set. Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa played Slingerland, but they used bigger drums. Can you point me toward any bop-oriented artists that recorded with Slingerland in the 1950s or '60s? Jorge Stark

MD drum historian Harry Cangany replies, "It is a Slingerland Sound King set, from 1968. I can pinpoint that year for certain, because the aluminum bracket on the 12" tom was only used in 1968. From 1969 on, the brackets were chromed steel. The shells feature mahogany inner and outer plies, with poplar in between. I think the finish is a walnut stain, even though the lighting makes it appear lighter. And you're right: The T-rods were changed on one side.

"The closest estimate I can give you of the value of your drums is based on Slingerland's Modern Jazz outfit, which included a 20" bass drum, 12" and 14" toms, a chrome over brass Krupa snare, one cymbal stand, a hi-hat stand, a snare stand, and a bass drum pedal. In 1969 it had a list price of $410. These days, Slingerland vintage drums tend to have the smallest resale values among the various brands. I can't explain it, I can only accept and report it. The bass drum would sell for about $350, the 12" tom for $150, and the 14" tom for $350, making the total value $850.

"Most bebop players seemed to play Gretsch or Camco back in the day. Ludwig, Slingerland, and Rogers offered kits in bebop sizes as well, but they tended to sell more sets with bigger drums. Still, Slingerland did have some small-drum endorsers back then, including Bobby Rosengarden, Jake Jerger, Sonny Igoe, and Morey Feld. You may also want to listen to Shelly Manne. He used Leedy drums (made in Chicago by Slingerland) until he switched to Sonor. Slingerland used the same shells for *both* brands until the demise of Leedy in the late 1960s."

Questions For MD's Drum Experts?

Send them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, or rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.

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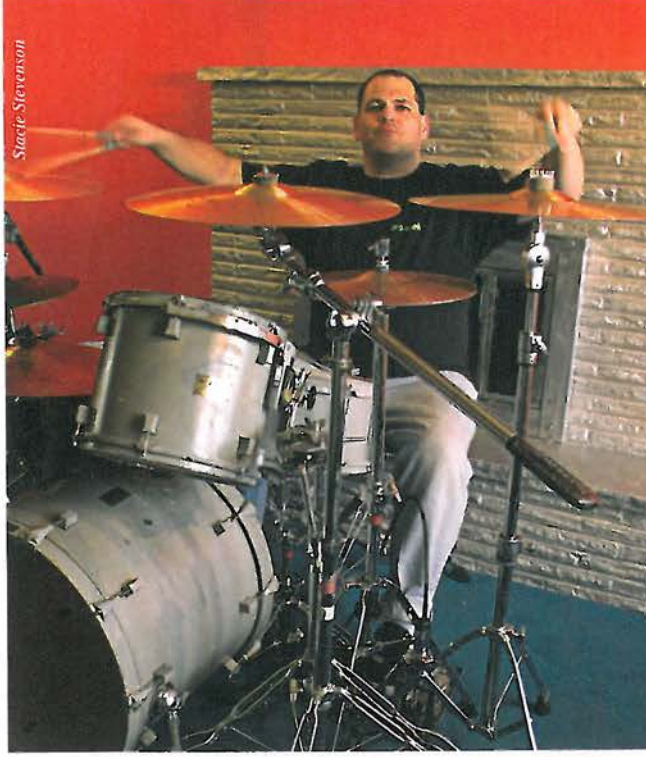
Practicing Tips From The Descendents'

Bill Stevenson


Stacie Stevenson

Q I'm a fourteen-year-old aspiring punk drummer, and you are my favorite punk drummer. The first issue of *Modern Drummer* I got was the one you were interviewed in. After I read that article, I picked up a copy of *Cool To Be You*, and your drumming astounded me. It was unlike anything I had ever heard.

This leads me to my questions. How did you teach yourself to play like that? What did you practice? And how did you get your playing speed so fast?

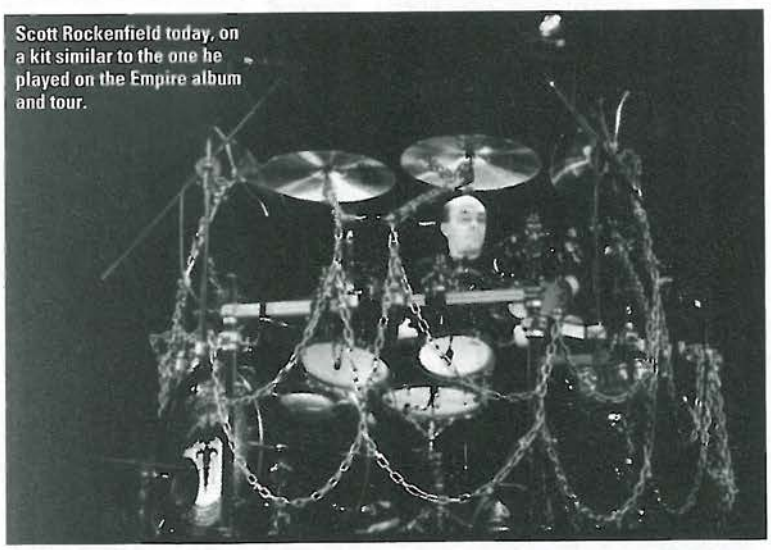
Wes Reid

A Thanks for your questions, Wes. I'll try to answer them in order. In the beginning, I played along with albums. I think everybody does this at first, right? In my case it was KISS, Sabbath, the Stones—stuff that was popular when I was a teenager. Once we got the band going, I started practicing the Descendents material very frequently. (This was easy to do, since I had no social life to speak of. All I *did* was practice.)

I mostly practice songs, as opposed to rudiments or drum exercises. I think about what the song means to me, what musical points I want to make, and how those points relate to the vocal, in particular. Then I practice those parts until I can play them at the tempo at which the song sits best. Practicing on a daily basis without fail (except for an occasional day of rest) has done a lot for my playing. It seems like if I take a longer break, it takes a full week just to get back to where I was before I stopped.

As far as developing speed goes, to be honest, I struggle real hard with it. Usually I just drink a ton of coffee and sort of hope for the best, just like everyone else does. One thing that may help is to limber up ahead of time. I do various stretches to make sure I stay limber, and I think that this stretching may be as important as practicing. I stretch again for twenty minutes or so after I'm done playing. This is probably the most important part of the whole deal. As with most of life's tasks, if you're not relaxed, you won't do it right.

Queensrÿche's Scott Rockenfield's Empire Kit


Scott Rockenfield today, on a kit similar to the one he played on the Empire album and tour.

Q I would like to know specifically what type of drums, cymbals, and drumheads were used on Queensrÿche's *Empire* album. Thanks!

J.B.

A Wow, J.B.—you've caught me a bit off guard. It's been *many* years since that album and tour. But I'll try my best.

The drums were Tama Artstars in a piano white finish. I used two 18x24 kicks, 8", 10", 12", and 13" rack toms in "power" depths, a 16x18 floor tom, a 6½x14 Artstar wood snare, a 3½x13 brass piccolo snare, and a complete set of Octobans. It was all supported by a customized Tama Power Tower rack system that I had coated in a white finish. I also had chains to drape the cymbal stands, which looked *very* cool.

The cymbals were all Paistes, and as I recall they were all 2002 models. I used two 20" heavy Chinas, 16", 18", and 19" Power crashes, 14" and 16" Fast crashes, a 22" heavy ride, and 14" heavy Sound Edge hi-hats. The drumheads on the toms and kicks were all Remo clear Pinstripes. The snare batters were coated Emperors.

The *Empire* album was recorded in Vancouver, Canada. We used a very big room in order to achieve the drum sounds. I hope this gives you the information you wanted. Take care!

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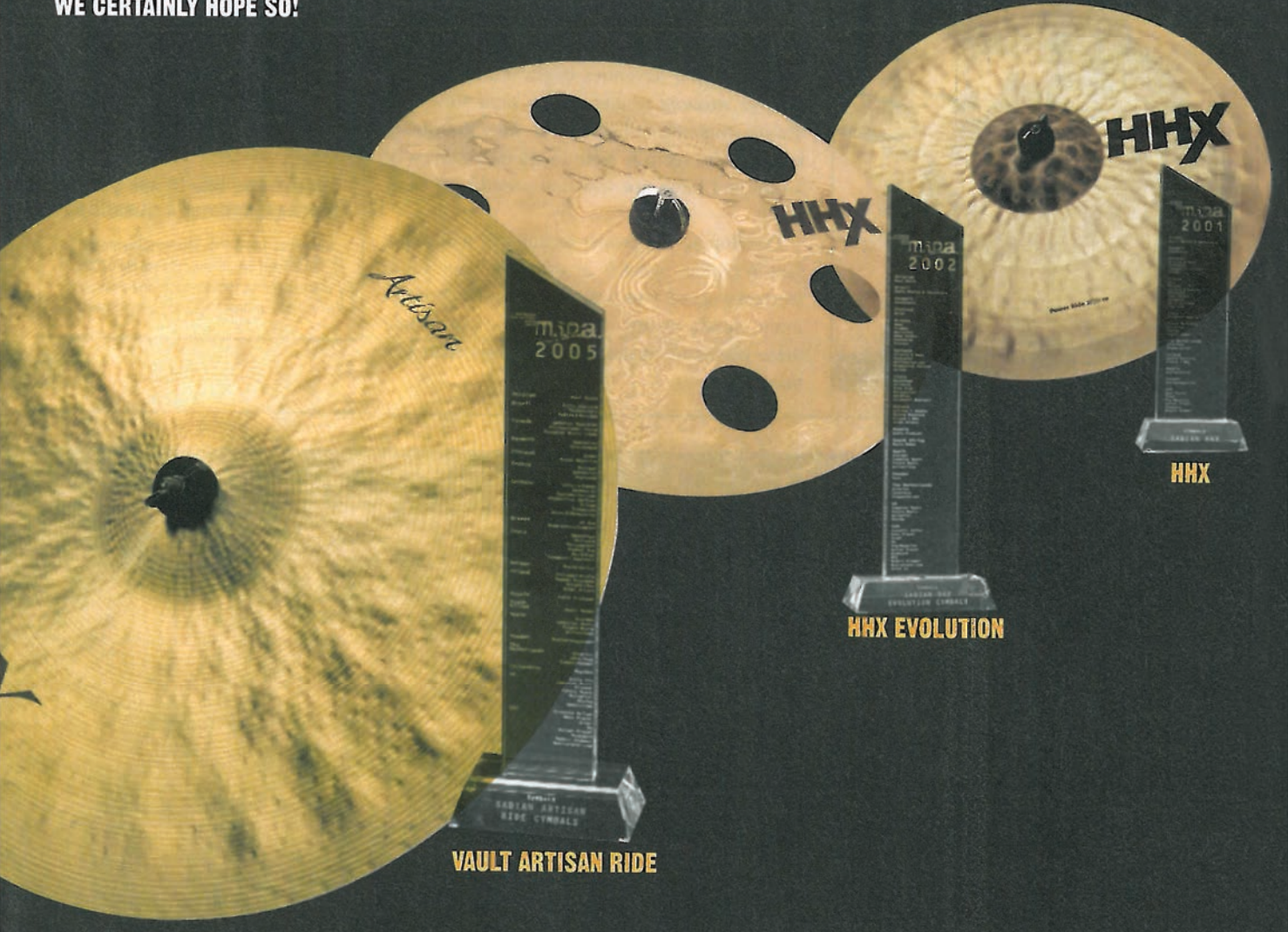

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Dom Famularo
On Attaining Speed

Q I've recently started playing drums again after a fifteen-year hiatus. Prior to that I had played for six years, and I've been playing for ten months since I picked up drums again. My questions have to do with developing hand speed. For six years I practiced rudiments, rolls, and fingering exercises. I developed control and rhythm, but speed seems almost unattainable.

How long does it take to develop speed in single-stroke rolls? Can you suggest some exercises for increasing speed? I would appreciate any advice or words of inspiration on this subject. **Alejandro Lizardi**

A I've seen thousands of drummers achieve speed. But control and endurance must balance high-speed abilities. Without control and endurance, the sound is erratic and of short duration—not great qualities for artistic expression!

There are a few approaches that should help you get the results you want. First: constant focused practicing. This is where muscle development happens. Training is needed to reprogram and begin new muscle memories. Having a set routine and working with a metronome is a key. The metronome acts as a gauge for your results.

Second: Know the techniques required to achieve speed. The Moeller movement explained in the Jim Chapin video *Speed, Power, Control, And Endurance* is a great help for this. Joe Morello's *Master Studies* book is a must for stick-routine practicing. My book, *It's Your Move*, also explains technique movement for expression.

Third: All of your practicing and playing must be executed with total relaxation. This will allow the speed to flow in a natural manner. All of the great players are relaxed all the time.

Speed can be achieved when all these factors come together. The more quality time you put in, the faster the results can be achieved. I've seen people in their seventies begin drumming and achieve amazing results. At the same time, I'm always impressed when I meet older drumming legends who seem to have found the fountain of youth and have not lost one second off their speed.

Developing the proper techniques will allow you to express what is in your head freely—at whatever speed you want. Desire plus commitment equals results. The fact that you asked these questions means you are closer than you think!

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A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"If you're only listening to the kind of music that you're *playing*, then you're not going to bring anything new to it. There are so many interesting things happening in so many types of music. I want to check that stuff out."

Jazz star **Matt Wilson**, November 1998

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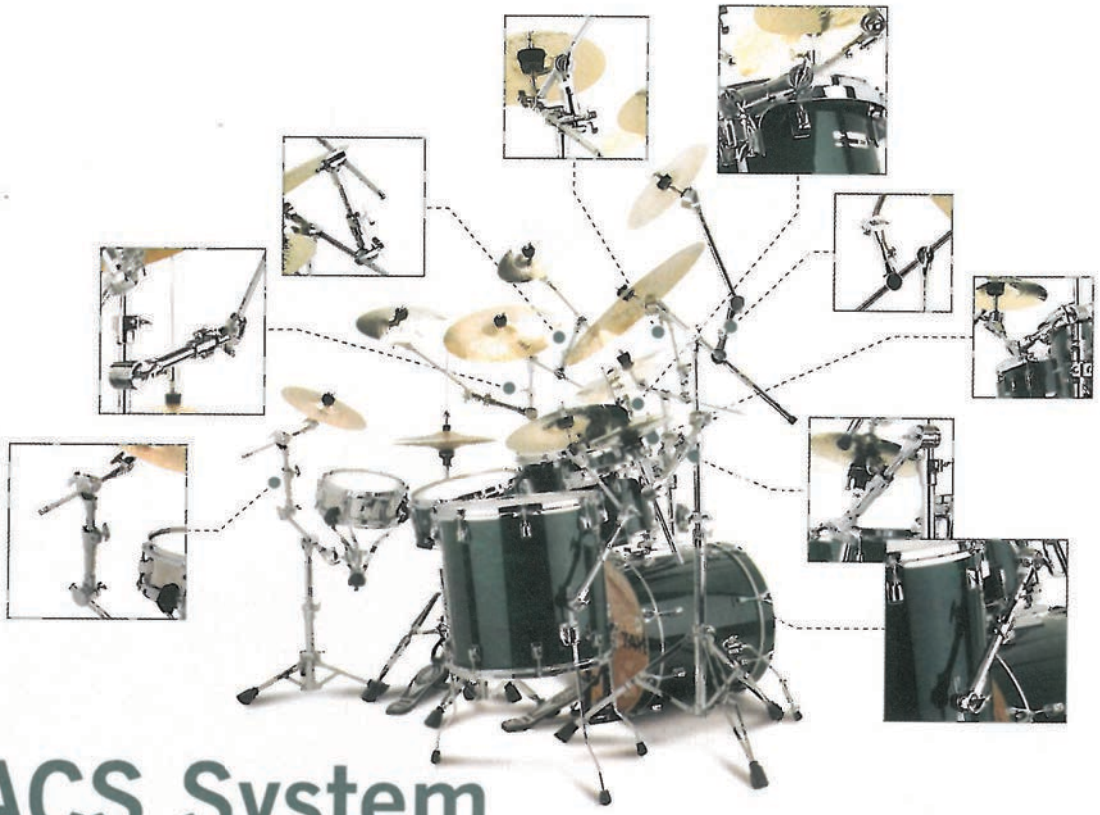

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Bobby Jarzombek

Impressive Performance & Technique

After viewing the newly released DVD *Performance & Technique* (Warner Bros.) from monster prog-metal drummer Bobby Jarzombek, it's easy to see why he was chosen by metal's flashiest frontman, Rob Halford, for the metal god's solo project a few years back. Besides having impressive technique, Jarzombek has mastered the art of stick twirling, and he incorporates a visually exciting approach to cymbal crashes, attacking from all angles, including two cymbals located *behind* his kit.

"I started stick twirling back in the heyday of metal in the late '80s, when Tommy Lee and Tommy Aldridge were doing a lot of it," says Jarzombek. "It took a couple of months to develop. Then I started figuring out what twirling techniques worked best at different tempos. I don't practice twirling much anymore, so when I have some clinics or gigs that call for it, I have to get back in shape and strengthen the muscles to pull it off convincingly. It's really tough on the forearms."

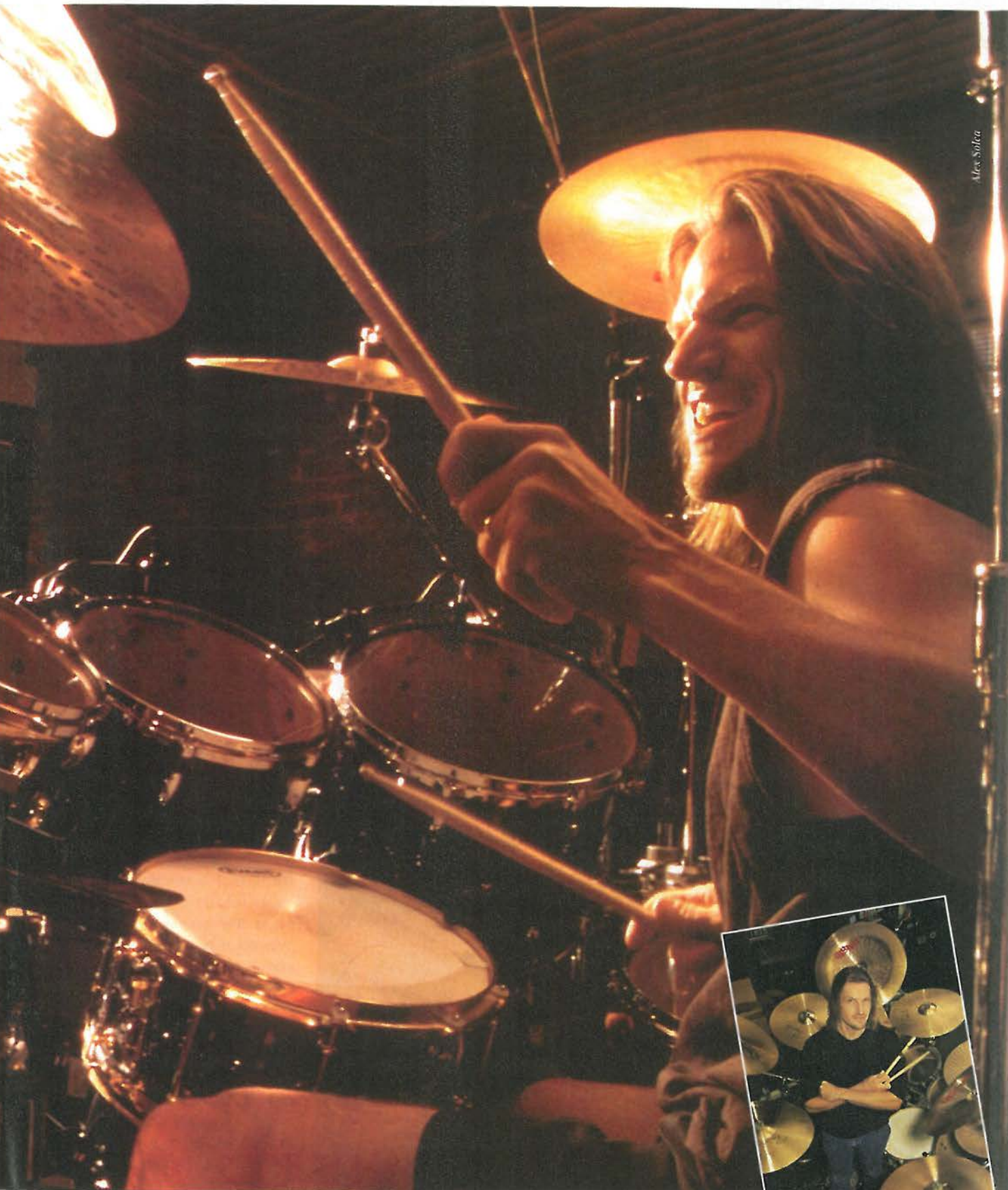
But Jarzombek is not all flash. His ambidextrous hand technique allows him to play complex grooves with left-hand lead, while incorporating interesting double bass patterns inside his groove and fill ideas. Jarzombek recalls, "I started using the open-handed technique [left-hand lead] about fifteen years ago, when I was playing with Riot. I learned all of their material with my left hand playing hi-hat and ride patterns. It felt great and made sense. Everything I learned after that was with left-hand lead. I still play fills leading with my right hand, and sometimes it's hard to come out of that and go back into a left-handed groove."

Jarzombek also plays barefooted, which began naturally, when he started playing drums at age ten in San Antonio, Texas. "I was into a lot of sports," the drummer says. "I would run outside barefooted, playing basketball or football, and then I would run back into the house and practice drums. When I started playing gigs in high school, it felt too weird to play with shoes on. I've been playing barefoot ever since."

Jarzombek bases a lot of his fill and solo ideas off of a hand/foot combination pattern technique that he calls the "Double Drop." He notes, "There's a fill that Tommy Aldridge did on the Pat Travers tune 'Snorting Whiskey, Drinking Cocaine,' which is where I learned this pattern. I took that basic pattern and developed a whole series of fill and groove ideas based on it. It also works well with stick twirling because there's a break in the pattern that allows you enough time to twirl."

Jarzombek is proud of his work on the DVD. "I produced it myself," he says. "It's mirrored after the formats that Weckl and Donati have used on their instructional videos. I tried to incorporate more interesting and educational bonus footage by including first-hand advice about recording in the studio, doing a live soundcheck, and picking out my cymbals at the Paiste factory."

For more information, go to www.bobbyjarzombek.com. **Mike Haid**



Alex Solca

Bill Stewart

New Solo Offering From The Jazz Great

Bill Stewart has become one of the most respected jazz drummers of our era. It seems we all want to investigate his lush time sense, his grainy cymbal sound, and even his perverted take on the textbook matched grip. Broach these observations to Bill, however, and he dismisses them with a hint of awkwardness: "I don't think about that much. I'm too busy making music that I like."

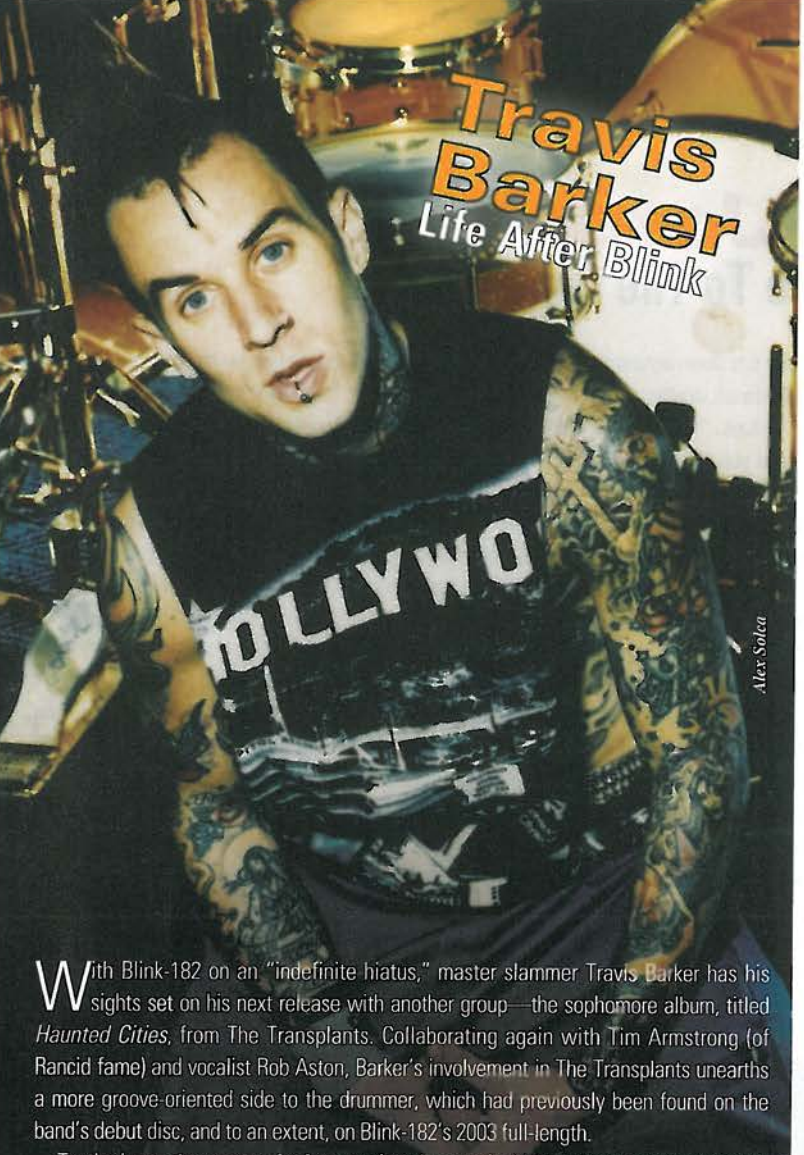
That music would be his latest solo outing, *Keynote Speakers*, which unites him with keyboard colleagues Kevin Hays and Larry Goldings. (See review on page 159.) The compositions, mostly Bill's, spring to life with some of Stewart's most daring drumming yet.

The project was recorded in 2002. Why the delay? "I went through a period of trying to get record companies interested," Bill explains, "and didn't get an offer that I liked. But I always intended to release it. So here it is, my 'latest work'—even though it's three years old! At the moment it's available through CD Baby [www.cdbaby.com], or people *might* be able to buy it from me at a gig."

Since the recording predated Bill's two-year collaboration with Zildjian, which resulted in Bill's signature Dry Complex ride, we're hearing his old Turkish Ks. "Most of them have cracks," he laments. "But the Dry Complex is very similar to the old K ride that I used on many recordings. Often I prefer the new one."

Commenting on his distinctive drum sound, Bill cautions, "There's a lot of problems to be avoided in the world of miking a drumset. The first thing is the balance of cymbals to drums: Often there's too much drums."

Those Gretsch drums still shine through, though, unmuffled except for a scrap of towel wedged between the pedal goalposts and the bass drum batter. That said, a vintage snob he's not. In fact, Bill prefers newer Gretsch drums. "They're a little brighter," he claims. "And, dare I say it, they have more balls." **T. Bruce Wittet**



Travis Barker

Life After Blink

With Blink-182 on an "indefinite hiatus," master slammer Travis Barker has his sights set on his next release with another group—the sophomore album, titled *Haunted Cities*, from The Transplants. Collaborating again with Tim Armstrong (of Rancid fame) and vocalist Rob Aston, Barker's involvement in The Transplants unearths a more groove-oriented side to the drummer, which had previously been found on the band's debut disc, and to an extent, on Blink-182's 2003 full-length.

Tracked over the course of a few sessions (some of which took place in Armstrong's basement), a majority of the record was assembled largely around spontaneous ideas. "We went into the studio with most of the record not being written," Barker admits. "We just kind of elaborated on ideas coming up with parts that we really loved. The songs arose from there."

Some of the drum parts were tracked conventionally, yet with others Barker came up with interesting loops. "I would play eight measures," he says, "and we'd find a bar that felt really good and loop it. Most Transplants stuff does lend itself to more of an electronic, drum 'n' bass feel than the other projects I've worked with."

Barker primarily used his Orange County Drum & Percussion set with Zildjian Z series and various effect cymbals in the studio. But he also enlisted a set of Roland V-Drums and a 1966 Slingerland kit. "It's pretty cool," Barker notes of the Slingerland set. "I bought it during the recording. I wanted an old vintage kit. We recorded with it one day, and I fell in love with it, so I ended up buying it off the guy I borrowed it from."

In other Barker news, the drummer has been working with Blink-182 singer/bassist Mark Hoppus on a new project called Plus 44, which also features vocalist Carol Heller. They've been recording at Barker's house, and the music has been described as electronic-based. It should be out some time later this year.

If Barker's recordings aren't enough, fans have been able to get a more intimate look into the life of the drummer and his family via the recent MTV series *Meet The Barkers*. "It's basically a documentary of what I did in the last year and what happened, mostly positive, with me and my family," Barker says. "I feel like it's more of a documentary than a reality show, because most reality shows have story lines and all sorts of other stuff. This was genuinely sincere and organic. Yeah, I think it's been cool."

Waleed Rashidi

New Order's Stephen Morris

Answering The Siren's Call

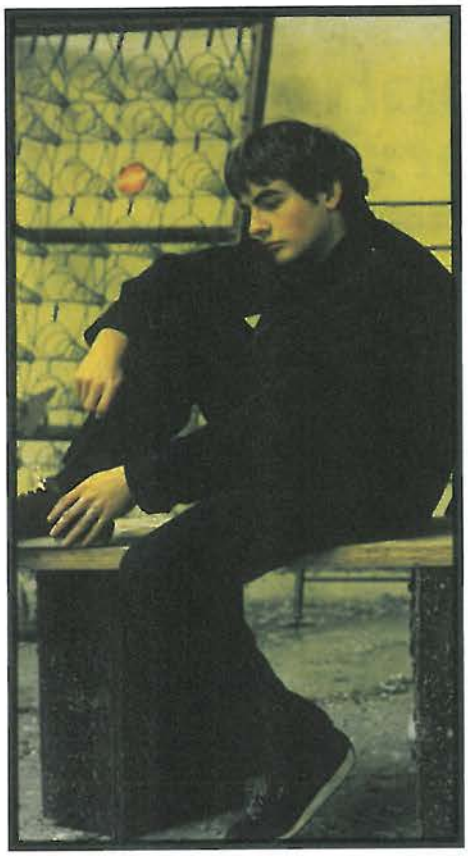
Eighties synth pop band New Order has returned with a new album, and after two years of working on *Waiting For The Siren's Call*, drummer Stephen Morris is pleased it's finally seeing the light of day. The band started out in Morris's own studio, which is a barn "in the middle of nowhere in the English countryside."

The songs began as jams, with Morris at times creating patterns at the computer. He describes the process as a marriage of machine and man. "Occasionally," Morris recalls, "when the other guys had gotten enough of the drum machine thing, they'd say, 'Stephen, go in that freezing cold barn and play your drums.'"

And what about Morris's drumming? It sounds fresh—and *real*. Stephen points to the track "Working Overtime" as one he particularly likes. "When you go into a barn and they say, 'Play your drums a little bit,' and then they say, 'That's *it*,' you may not be sure what you've done, but you know you've made somebody happy."

After developing the material at Morris's barn, the band then went to actress Jane Seymour's Tudor mansion in England, where they set up in her oak-paneled, draped ballroom to record "properly." "We had gotten really good drum sounds at my barn," he says. "They were ringy and hard. And we weren't having any luck with drum sounds at Seymour's mansion. So we used this dreadful thing called Beat Detective in Pro Tools that allowed us to magically replace my performances from Seymour's house with my original tracks from the barn. It ended up sounding very good."

Robyn Flans



The Music's
Phil Jordan
Welcome To The Groove

When Phil Jordan sits down behind the kit for his band, UK rockers The Music, he has one goal in mind: making people dance. Jordan says the secret is in the dynamics. "You want to build, get the tension, and then release," he says. "You play something over and over again. And then you take something away, like the kick drum, and you play it for a while like that. And when you put the kick drum back in, everyone releases."

Jordan, of Leeds, England, began drumming when he was thirteen years old. Great rock drummers including John Bonham, Mitch Mitchell, and Dave Grohl provided early inspiration, but soon Jordan turned to dance music makers like The Chemical Brothers for ideas. Just a few years later, while still in school, Jordan and his friends formed The Music. The band debuted with a self-titled album in 2003, and they've recently released their sophomore effort, *Welcome To The North*.

Jordan calls the third track, "Bleed From Within," the most important drumming song on the new album. Several magazine writers have tried to identify the groove, assuming it's an ethnic rhythm. However, Jordan says it's the result of him, bassist Stuart Coleman, and producer Brendan O'Brien lining up three drumkits and jamming. The groove they developed became the basis of the song.

"This is a democracy when it comes to songwriting," Jordan says. "Somebody will start with a loop or a groove, and everyone will chip in and build to see where we can take it."

Jordan says the key to making good music is keeping it real. "You'll see, if you ever see us doing a soundcheck, that we're the same kind of band during soundcheck as when we're playing a show," he says. "Lots of bands become someone else when they get on stage. But music is about baring your soul. If you can't be honest with me when you're on stage, how can I trust what you're saying to me?" **Harriet L. Schwartz**

NEWS

Liberty DeVitto has been playing dates with NYC Hit Squad. For more info check out www.libertydevitto.com.

The Doors' **John Densmore** produced and played drums on the debut album by Reza, *Ray Of The Wine*.

Junzo Tateiwa of Japanese space rockers Ghost is on Pochakaite Malko's *Laya* (www.tutinoko.net, www.waysidemusic.com).

Seemless, with original Killswitch Engage singer Jesse David, boasts the drumming of **Derek Kerswill**, formerly of Shadows Fall. The band, who recently came off the Headbangers Ball tour, have a new, self-titled album out.

Timm Biery (Nils Lofgren, Danny Gatton, Frank Marino & Mahogany Rush) has recently been in the studio with Nils Lofgren and is currently on the road with hard-bop trio Triplicity. For info on tour dates, check out www.timmbiery.com.

Weerd Science is the solo project from **Josh Eppard** of Coheed And Cambria. *Friends And Nervous Breakdowns* is the title of the new CD.

Gene Lake is on *2005*, the latest disc from Screaming Headless Torsos. A live DVD is out now as well.

Keith Hall has just released a new CD with his band Tri-Fi and is currently on tour with Curtis Stigers.

In addition to recording and touring with Dolly Parton, **Chuck Tilley** is currently the house drummer for *Nashville Star* on CMT.

Tony Verderosa is on *Suspended Animation*, the new solo CD by Dream Theater guitarist John Petrucci. Tony's latest books include *The Drummers Guide To Loop Based Music, Techno Play-Along Guide Vol. 1*, and *The Techno Primer—The Essential Guide To Loop Based Music*. And Tony's educational *VFX* videos are now available on a single DVD.

Shawn Drove is on tour with Megadeth.

While on a break from touring with KISS, **Eric Singer** has been doing a short European tour with his group ESP (Eric Singer Project). Eric has also re-joined Alice Cooper for the recording of his new album and upcoming tour.

Gene Jackson has just completed a short tour of Japan with The George Colligan Trio.

Matt Lydon is on Averi's debut, *Drawn To Revolving Doors*.

Derico Watson and **J.D. Blair** are on Victor Wooten's latest CD, *Soul Circus*. **Dennis Chambers** is also on one track.

Josh Freese and **Nisan Stewart** play drums on Tweet's latest disc, *It's Me Again*. **Soul Diggas** programmed and played percussion.

Dylan Wissing is on tour with UK singer Julia Jones.

Ryan Richards is in the studio with Funeral For A Friend, working on the band's upcoming album.

Motograter drummer **Crispy** is in the studio with his new side project, Ghost Machine.

Dennis Chambers has a new solo album out, titled *Planet Earth*. Dennis is currently on tour with Santana.

Percussionist **Bobby Allende** has joined the Santana family, replacing longtime percussionist **Raul Rekow**.

Steve Ferrone is on tour with Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers.

Dave DiCenso is on the debut solo album by Dream Theater guitarist John Petrucci. Dave was also on the bill at Drum Daze in Columbus, Ohio.

Celso Alberti is playing drumset on the first leg of the Steve Winwood tour, along with percussionist **Cafe**.

Best wishes for a speedy recovery to **Bruce Aitken**, Canadian blues drummer and producer of the Cape Breton Drum Fest. Bruce suffered a heart attack and had to undergo a double bypass operation.

Matt Cameron has been in the studio with Pearl Jam, working on a record.

Keith Carlock is back working with Donald Fagan.

George Schwindt has been on tour with Flogging Molly.

Ringo Starr has a new CD out called *Choose Love*. For updates check out www.ringostarr.com.

Jeff Conrad is on tour with Phantom Planet.

Chad Szeliga has been working with Breaking Benjamin.

Adam Topol is on tour with Jack Johnson.

Chet McCracken and Chris Pinnick have an album due out this summer called *Sounds From The Cul-De-Sac*. McCracken can also be heard on new CDs by Daniella, Shakeh, Pat Boone, Tony Brantley, Tyler Hilton, Alicen, Holly Wynnette, Ken Dravis, and Nothing Error.

Look for **Tris Imboden** on *Chicago XXX*, due out in the fall. Tris can also be heard on albums by Jennifer Barber, Chris Cassle, and Amy Gilliom.

Lindsay Jamieson has been working with Ben Folds and is on his *Songs For Silverman* release, which came out in April.

Congratulations to Diamond Rio's **Brian Prout** and his wife Stephanie on the birth of their twins.

DRUM DATES This month's important events in drumming history

Big band great **Don Lamond** was born on 8/18/21, **Jim Capaldi** on 8/2/44, **Keith Moon** on 8/23/47.

Gary Chester passed away on 8/17/87. **Lionel Hampton** passed away on 8/31/02.

Let's all dance! On 8/30/75, KC & The Sunshine band (with **Robert Johnson** on drums) hit number-1 with "Get Down Tonight."

On 8/18/79, Chic (with **Tony Thompson** on drums) hit number-1 with "Good Times."

On 8/11/98, Medeski Martin & Wood (with **Billy Martin** on drums) release their fifth album and their first on Blue Note, *Combustication*.

Happy Birthday!

Ginger Baker
(Cream): 8/19/39

Airto Moreira
(percussion great): 8/5/41

Danny Seraphine
(Chicago): 8/28/48

Sib Hashian
(Boston): 8/17/49

Dennis Elliott
(Foreigner): 8/18/50

Tommy Aldridge
(rock great): 8/15/50

Anton Fig
(CBS Orchestra): 8/8/52

Billy Ward
(sessions): 8/24/52

Steve Smith
(Journey, Vital Information): 8/21/54

Jon "Bermuda" Schwartz
(Weird Al): 8/18/56

Rikki Rockett
(Poison): 8/8/59

John Farriss
(INXS): 8/10/61

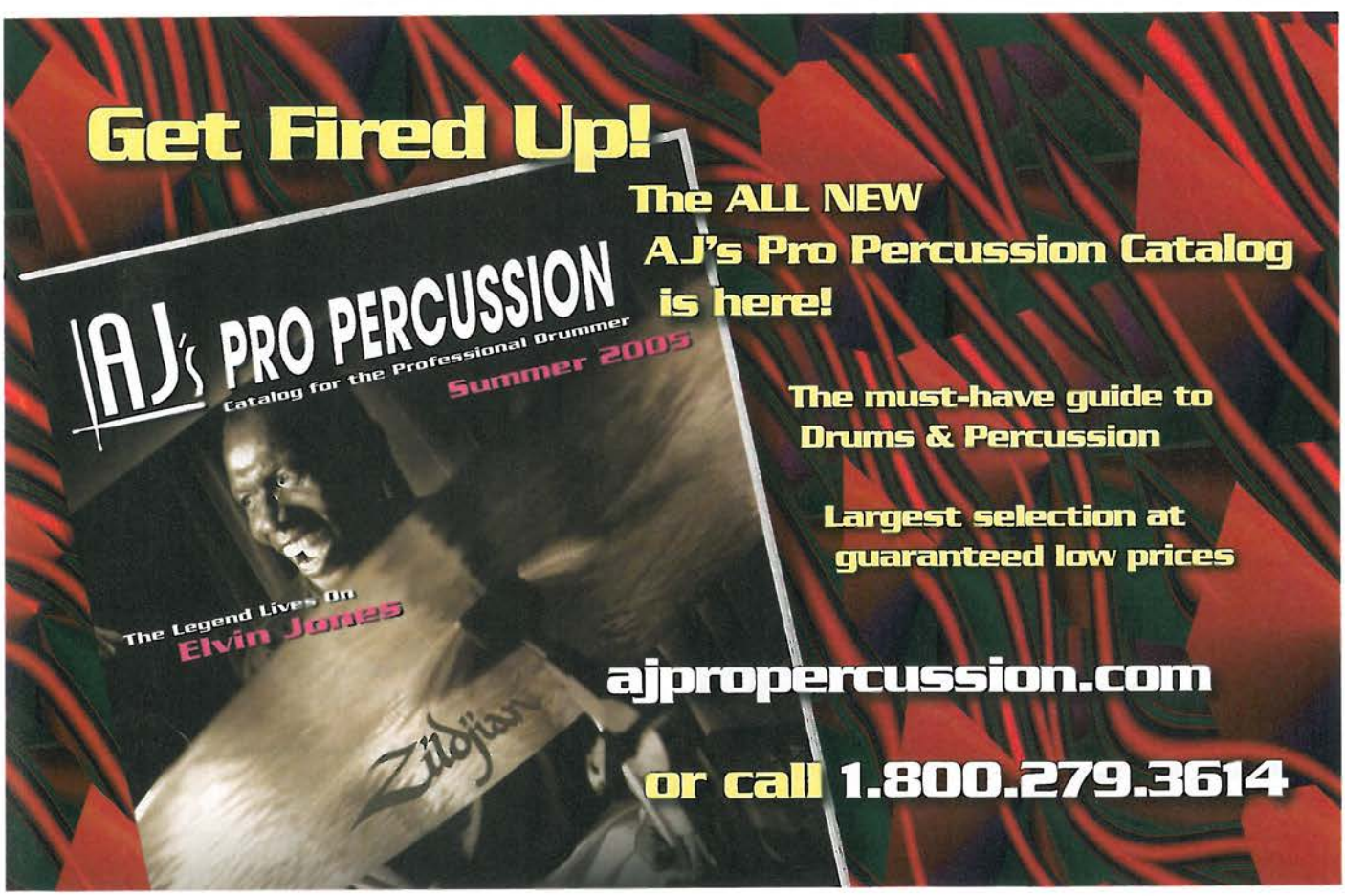
Steve Gorman
(Black Crowes): 8/17/65

Brian Tichy
(Billy Idol): 8/18/68

Adrian Young
(No Doubt): 8/26/69

Paul Doucette
(Matchbox Twenty): 8/22/72

MD Radio **To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.**



We did it...AGAIN!

E-Series wins m.i.p.a. award!

Once again 58 magazines from all over the world selected Regal Tip as the Best Drumstick.

From the company that gave you the original nylon tip comes the E-Series. The dark tone of wood with the durability of nylon.

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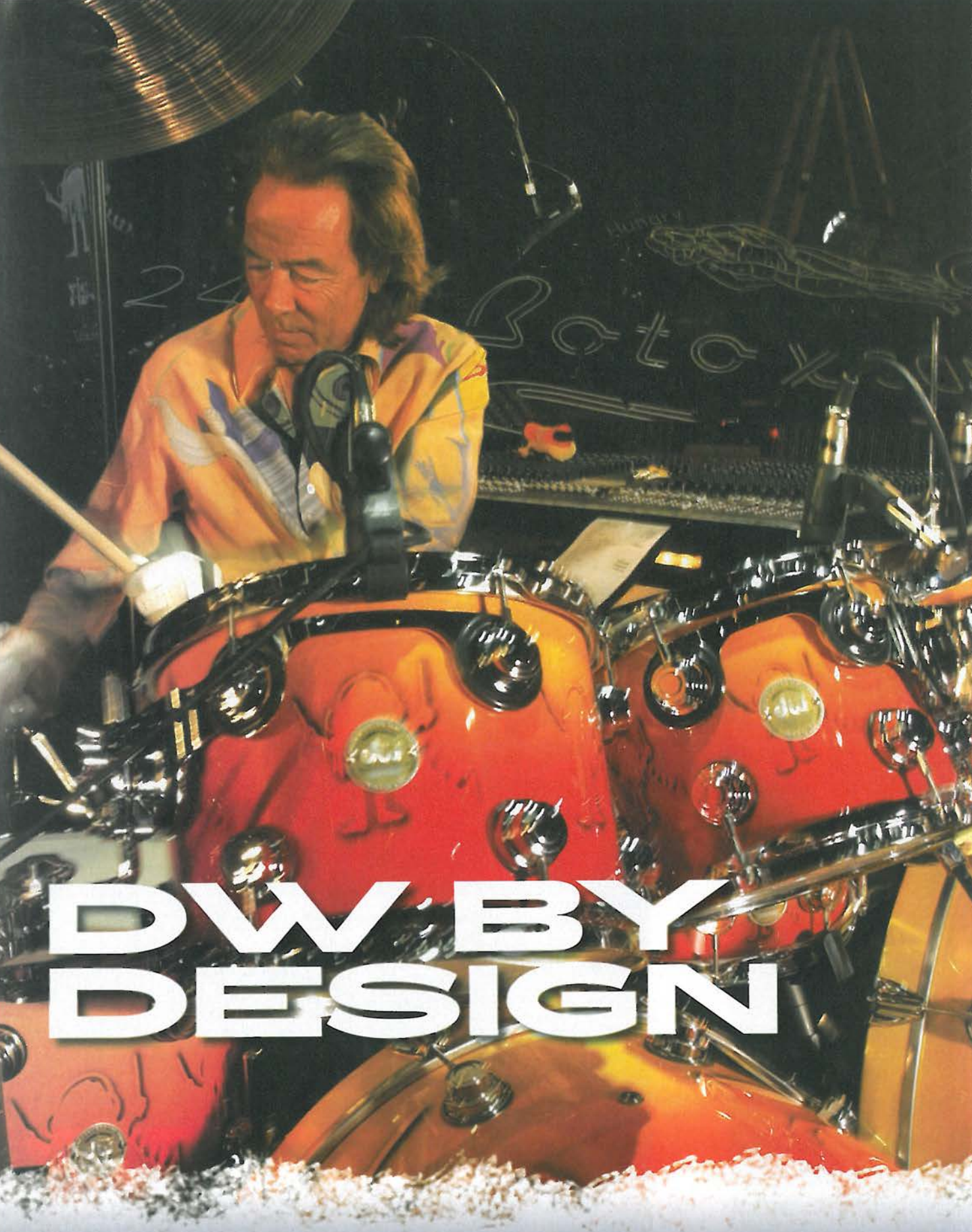

DW BY DESIGN

BUILT-IN BOTTOM

VLT™ TECHNOLOGY IN EVERY COLLECTOR'S SERIES® KIT

The quest for the ultimate bass drum sound begs the question: what's the secret formula for maximum low end with plenty of punch? The answer: DW's specialized Vertical Low Timbre (VLT) technology to create Built-In Bottom. By turning the innermost ply vertical, there's less tension on the shell. Thus, it has a lower fundamental, and with all of the articulation and tuning range you've come to expect from Collector's Series® drums. Built-In Bottom utilizing VLT™ technology— a revelation in drum making? Absolutely! Just ask Nigel.

Now, all DW bass drums and floor toms from 14" to 24" come standard with Built-In Bottom. It's the new benchmark in bass response and it's only available on DW Collector's Series® drums.

Hear Built-In Bottom at your authorized DW drums dealer today or to get the low-down on this exciting new advancement in drum technology, visit www.dwdrums.com.

Artist: Nigel Olsson (Elton John)
Date/Time: 2/26/05 04:39:06
Location: The Colloseum at Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada. Sound check for Red Piano show.

"DW has put that tonal quality in there that I was always looking for. Now, I don't have to tune the drums way way-way down like I used to in the beginning, because now, the technology's in there."

— NIGEL OLSSON

SEVEN-PLY SELECT TIMBER MAPLE SHELL WITH BUILT-IN BOTTOM

THE DRUMMER'S CHOICE®

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dw

DW Mini Pro Kit And 6000 Series Stands

More Than Meets The Eye

by Rick Van Horn
Photos by Jim Esposito

KEY NOTES

Mini Pro

- kit offers high-end construction quality and sound
- snare stand doesn't match quality of other hardware

6000 Series

- cymbal and snare stands offer professional performance with light weight
- geared tilters don't allow infinite positioning

Okay, I'll admit it. The DW Mini Pro kit completely fooled me. When I saw it in DW's 2005 new-products flyer, I immediately assumed that it was the latest "compact" or "subway" kit for gigging drummers who want the utmost in portability. Several companies have offered such kits over the years, and the Mini Pro looked like a high-end approach to that concept.

Ten-year-old Tommy Esposito plays a Mini Pro kit flanked by two standard-sized DW 9000 series boom stands.

Well, I had the high-end part right. But I was wrong about the "gigging" aspect...unless we're talking about gigs featuring ten-year-olds like our photographer's son, Tommy Esposito. (Tommy is shown here behind the Mini Pro, with two "standard" DW 9000 series boom stands to give an impression of scale.)

According to DW's marketing director, Scott Donnell, "The Mini Pro is a pro-quality set that includes a scaled-down hardware pack, so it really is a 'high-end' kit for kids. The idea was born out of the desire expressed by some of our top artists to have a DW kit that their kids could enjoy."

Details

The Mini Pro kit features a 14x16 bass drum, a 6x10 rack tom, a 9x13 floor tom, and a 5x12 matching wood snare—all made with 7-ply 100% maple shells without reinforcing hoops, and available with attractive Royal Onyx or Silver Sparkle FinishPly coverings. These drums may be small, but they deliver entirely respectable high-end acoustic performance.

Perhaps I should have been tipped off by the inclusion of "scaled down" hardware. It's *really* scaled down, to the point where it would be virtually impossible for an adult to play on the kit. The bass drum is fitted with a classic "consolette" tom holder, and the floor tom legs only bring the drum up to a maximum height of about 18". An extra-low throne, cut-down 6000-style hi-hat and snare drum stands, a bass drum cymbal arm, and a lightweight but eminently playable 7000-style bass drum pedal complete the assembly.

I hasten to add that "scaled down" refers only to dimensions of height or length. The bass drum spurs, cymbal stand, tom-mount and floor-tom leg brackets, and floor tom legs are otherwise of the same strength and quality as DW's high-end stuff. The only exception is the snare stand, which uses a surprisingly low-tech thumbscrew to secure the size of the basket.

The snare basket is the only light-duty component.

Mini Pro Conclusion

I envy the kid who gets to begin his or her drumming career on *this* baby. I can't remember any time in history when such a high-quality assembly was specifically sized for very young players.

Of course, Scott Donnell did hedge his bets a bit, adding that "The Mini Pro kit could be used by adults if paired with standard-sized hardware." *Oh* yeah. If an adult were to equip this little gem with full-sized (but still appropriately lightweight) hardware, it could become one of the best-sounding "compact" gigging or practice sets available today.

Most of the hardware on the Mini Pro is as heavy-duty as that found on other high-end DW kits.

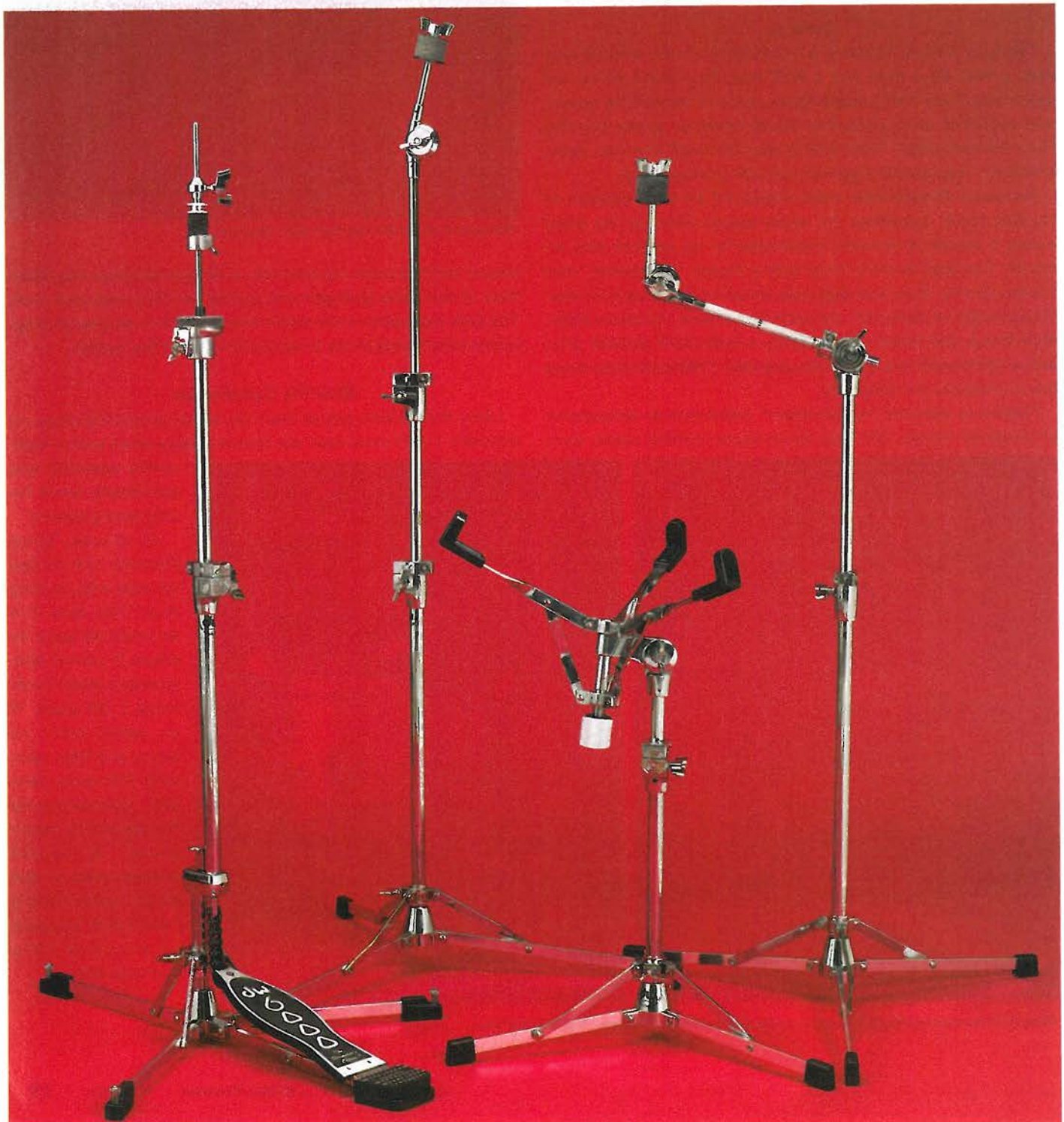
DW 6000 Series Hardware

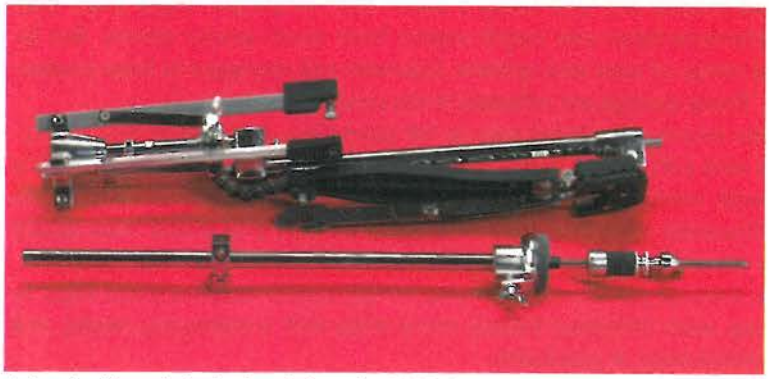
Which brings us to the subject of DW's 6000 series hardware, and explains why we're piggybacking our review of it to that of the Mini Pro kit.

For years, working pro and semi-pro drummers pleaded for stands that offered high quality and state-of-the-art functional features without the massive size and weight of double-braced legs and huge tube sections. In 1999, DW responded to these pleas by introducing the 6710 flush-base cymbal stand. Its lightweight design harked back to the easily portable stands of the 1960s, but it also featured modern-day tilters, bushings, and overall construction quality. *MD* reviewed the stand in the October '99 issue, concluding that it was a winner.

Not surprisingly, DW quickly introduced a full line of 6000 series stands, including a boom stand, a snare stand, and a hi-hat. The boom stand and snare stand were as nifty as the original straight stand. The hi-hat...not so much. In fact, DW spent the next several years working on various designs to get a functional hi-hat that would fold up easily, have a good playing feel, and be as lightweight and compact as its 6000 series siblings.

I'm happy to report that DW's efforts have succeeded. At this past January's NAMM show, they re-introduced the entire 6000 series—including a hi-hat design that they can be proud of. Let's take a quick look at each item individually.





A slotted rod beneath the footboard allows the 6500 hi-hat to set up quickly and break down compactly.

6500 Hi-Hat

Since I made such a point about the hi-hat, we'll start with it. The new 6500 hi-hat is, quite simply, a marvel of design. It has a very compact fold-up tripod, along with a slotted footplate-bracing rod that slips into and out of position easily. The tripod and the bracing rod combine to give the pedal a solid base on which to operate, with no "sponginess" to the feel under one's foot. In a nice touch, the rubber feet at the ends of all three legs are equipped with adjustable spikes to help secure the lightweight stand against sliding under the player's foot pressure.

The hi-hat features a vertical direct-pull system that's simple, smooth, and efficient. A chain links the footboard to the bottom of the pull rod. Spring tension is adjustable by means of a drumkey-operated pull block that's easy to get to.

The upper section of the hi-hat features DW's high-tech, spring-loaded hi-hat seat, which allows the user to adjust the tilt of the lower cymbal by means of a large, easy-to-reach horizontal wing bolt. In another nice touch, the stand comes with short and long pull rods, as well as with the same drumkey-lockable hi-hat clutch featured on DW's high-end stands.

Perhaps the best thing about the new hi-hat is that it offers all of its player-friendly features at a carrier-friendly weight of only seven and a half pounds. Yay!

6700 Straight/Boom And 6710 Straight Stands

The two cymbal stands each feature fairly wide-based tripods for stability. The straight stand is a two-tiered model, with memory locks at each height adjustment. It'll put a crash cymbal well over 4½ feet up.

The straight/boom model features one height-adjustment tier, along with a boom arm that's about 10" long (including the tilter). I suppose that DW has limited the arm length to prevent the possibility of overbalancing the lightweight base with ride or large crash cymbals. But I still think a slightly longer boom arm would be beneficial, if only for the opportunity to mount small crashes and splashes in tight places around a kit.

Both of these stands would easily handle any cymbal that I would use on a club or casual gig. (And while I may not be as young as I was, I still smack my cymbals pretty authoritatively.) The only downside I can see to their design is their tilters. The original 6000 series stands came equipped with DW's high-end gearless tilters, which provided infinite adjustment capability. In an effort to make the new 6000 models more affordable, DW has employed ratchet-style tilters. They're well made, and they work fine. But they aren't as nice as the gearless models. Frankly, I'd be willing to pay the extra cost to have unlimited positioning options.

The boom stand weighs almost exactly five pounds. The straight stand is a few ounces *lighter.*

6300 Snare Stand

The 6300 snare stand looks for all the world like a scaled-down version of DW's high-end 9000-series model. A large, knurled cylindrical knob adjusts the snare basket, which can accommodate 15" and smaller drums. The basket is attached to a geared tilter, again in an effort to keep costs down.

The legs of the tripod are a couple inches shorter than those on the cymbal stands, in order to facilitate easy placement in tight spaces between bass drum and hi-hat pedals. This poses no stability problem, however, since the force of impact on a snare drum is basically straight down. Unless you play a super-heavy steel or bronze snare drum, the 6300 stand should handle virtually any drum in almost any playing situation. All this, at a weight of just under six pounds!

6000 Series Conclusion

DW's 6000 series stands offer performance features that will more than capably serve any clubbing drummer, weekender, or casual player. And if you figure a fairly standard "gigging" setup of one hi-hat stand, one snare stand, one boom cymbal stand, and two straight cymbal stands, their total weight would be just over thirty pounds. Toss in a bass drum pedal, and your hardware bag would weigh about forty pounds. Heck, I've got a *throne* that weighs almost that much.

THE NUMBERS

Mini Pro drumkit	$1,999.00
6300 snare stand	$99.99
6500 hi-hat stand	$141.99
6700 straight/boom cymbal stand	$99.99
6710 straight cymbal stand	$99.99

(805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.

Craviotto Unlimited Edition Snare Drum

What's In A Name?

by Paul Bielewicz

KEY NOTES

- exceptional volume and projection
- versatile and responsive
- 10-lug design allows great tuning range
- cast lugs don't reflect same appeal as other high-end components
- limited size offerings

The name "Craviotto" has come to be synonymous with high-end, solid-shell snare drums created by one of the foremost drum makers in the world. With this reputation for quality, limited offerings, and one-of-a-kind hand-craftsmanship, the Craviotto name has not previously conjured up images of affordability. However, at the 2005 NAMM show master drum maker Johnny Craviotto introduced the Unlimited Edition solid-shell maple snare model. In a nutshell, it's a more "production-oriented" drum, intended for the mid-range price market.

Since Unlimited models are built using a steam-bent single-ply maple shell, they offer the tonal characteristics one might expect from much pricier drums. But by offering a limited range of sizes and options, Craviotto has managed to keep production costs lower. Those savings are reflected in the price of the drum.

Unlimited series drums are offered only in 14" diameters, and only in 5½" or 6½" depths. We were sent a 6½"-deep model for this review. The single-ply maple shell is complemented with reinforcing hoops. The ten cast lugs feature a diamond shape that echoes the Craviotto logo. The drum is finished off with a high-end Trick GS007 aluminum throw-off and 20-strand snare wires.

The drums are shipped pre-tuned, and come in high-quality cordura drum bags. In addition to the bag, each Unlimited Edition snare ships with a tuning key, sticks, and your first replacement head. A nice touch.

Construction And Finish

As one might expect from Craviotto, the construction and finish on our review drum was outstanding. The maple grain showed nicely through the hand-rubbed satin oil finish. The satin oil lends just enough luster to bring out the grain of the wood, but not so much as to reduce the resonance of the drum the way some heavy, high-gloss finishes can do.

The cast lugs are a bit gaudy for my taste, and don't seem quite as classy as the other component fittings on the drums. But they correspond to the Craviotto diamond-shaped logo, and they suit the overall look adequately. The presence of ten lugs (as opposed to eight on many lower-end models) not only allowed us to tune the drum higher without fear of damaging the integrity of the shell, but also helped the drum keep its tone without getting "muddy" when tuned to lower tension levels.

The reinforcing hoops are also crafted of a single ply of maple, bent and formed around the interior of the drum at the top and bottom. Reinforcing hoops add strength, as the name suggests. But they also raise the pitch of the drum slightly, promote stick attack, and serve to increase volume and projection.

The Craviotto "diamond" lug is designed to match the company's logo badge.

The Unlimited Edition snare drum is fitted with the Trick machined-aluminum GS007 throw-off.

Sound Characteristics

In its as-shipped, pre-tuned state of medium tension (batter and snare side), the volume and projection of the Unlimited Edition snare was readily apparent. A hit in the middle of the batter head was crisp, dry, and articulate. The sound was very "woody," with a nice overtone and a lot of body. As we progressed from the middle of the batter head towards the outside edge, the overtone became more and more apparent.

As we reached the outside edge, the original overtone was complemented by a higher-pitched overtone approximately an octave above the original. The two harmonized to form a great ring-out tone. The "hang-time" of this ring-out (time from hit to silence) is longest with the drum tuned to a medium tension: almost six seconds with a hit towards the edge of the drum, about five seconds a few inches nearer the center, and about four and a half seconds at the center of the batter head.

The 10-lug design allows the drum to be tuned quite low before the center of the batter head starts to get loose and muddy. At a low tension (just tight enough to smooth out the ripples) the drum was incredibly sensitive, with excellent snare response. The volume and projection were just as apparent at this tuning as with others. But the "woody" flavor of the body wasn't exhibited. What was left was a very "rat-a-tat-tat" staccato snare sound, with a significantly reduced hang-time. But with the snares turned off, the drum could sound just as big as a low rack tom.

As we increased batter head tension to a medium-high point, some of the ring-out hang time was lost. Hang times ranged from about four seconds in the middle to about two seconds towards the edge. However, an increased level of snare sensitivity and response compensated for this sacrifice. Barely a feather's touch of the stick to the head made the 20-strand snares sing. The bi-octave overtone discussed above existed at this tension level also. But the higher-pitched tone was more apparent—especially when the drum was struck in the area halfway between the center of the batter head and the edge.

At a high tension the snare exhibited qualities one might expect from a piccolo. Again, the 10-lug design allowed us to tune quite high, because the tension was more evenly distributed around the circumference of the shell than it would've been with fewer lugs. A hit in the middle of the head produced a very bright and articulate sound, with almost no overtone. Overtones at the halfway point and the edge were moderate at best, but the sensitivity was still present. Ring-out times ranged from about two seconds in the middle to about three seconds at the edge.

Overall Impressions

Craviotto Unlimited Edition drums are very responsive, exhibit lots of overtones, and are very loud. The Trick machined aluminum throw-off operates smoothly and quietly, the 20-strand snares are responsive, and the 10-lug design allows great versatility of tuning.

These drums offer articulation and sensitivity that's very competitive with that of mid-priced multi-ply drums. Meanwhile, their single-shell construction offers a level of volume and sustain not often found at *any* price range.

THE NUMBERS

5½ and 6½x14 ..... **$995**

Price includes cordura drum bag, drumkey, drumsticks, and spare drumhead.

(831) 763-0855, www.craviottodrums.com.

Meinl Byzance Fast Hi-Hats

From Thomas To You

by Chap Ostrander

The Generation X cymbals that Meinl designed in conjunction with innovative drum star Thomas Lang have been pretty successful. Now Meinl has collaborated with Thomas to create a new type of hi-hat for their more traditionally made Byzance line. Byzance Fast hi-hats were specifically designed to complement Thomas's complex and multi-dimensional drumming style. (But mere mortals can enjoy them too.) They're available in 13" and 14" sizes.

How They're Made

Cymbals in the Byzance line are produced from individually cast blanks that are hand-hammered to give them their unique sound quality. Thomas Lang matched up a pair with different finishes to achieve the acoustical and visual mix he desired. The top cymbal has a Brilliant finish, with lots of overtones and cutting highs. The bottom cymbal has a Dark finish, with lathing plus hammer marks inside and out. Eight holes are drilled into each cymbal, about a half inch from the edge. These holes allow air to escape and prevent the possibility of them locking up.

KEY NOTES

- clear and cutting sound
- strong, unchokable "chick"
- striking combination of brilliant and dark cymbal finishes

How They Sound

I tried the 14" size first, playing an open/closed swing jazz pattern. The cymbals responded with a smooth wash. It was easy to control the amount of contact between the upper and lower cymbals, resulting in a really nice blend between them. They were very articulate and clean. In a side-by-side comparison between the Byzance and my traditional hi-hats, the Byzance cymbals yielded a wider range of overtones.

When I closed the hi-hats with my foot, there was substantially greater presence to the "chick" sound than one would expect from cymbals of this weight. This can be attributed to the holes in each cymbal. Even when the cymbals were held together tightly, they didn't have the choked sound I would have expected. (For those who have varied the tone of closed hats by pressing down with your foot while rolling on the cymbals, you would still get that sound—but with increased brightness.)

I judged that the Fast hi-hats would work in a variety of applications, as long as I remembered that they possess more of an up-front sound than the standard hi-hats I've worked with. This came from using them in a show, then later in a rock setting where I could really play out. The cutting quality remained consistent through all styles.

The 13" pair had all the characteristics of the 14"s, but with a higher voice. Everything else—the wash, the stick response, the cutting power—was the same. The real fun started when I set up *both* sets on two hi-hat pedals, and played 16ths and triplets between my hands and feet. I was able to play at various speeds, and the cymbals projected every nuance I put into them. It was very satisfying, and I began to understand why Thomas Lang likes to use multiple hi-hat stands and work between them. I've always thought that each foot and hand can be utilized individually to create a musical statement. Although I think Thomas's stellar position is safe despite my best efforts, it was good to hear the sound coming out of the hi-hats that I put into them.

Conclusion

Byzance Fast hi-hats are extremely musical and expressive. The technology behind their design allows them to meet the demands of the most modern music, while their "old school manufacturing" pedigree gives them the tone and musicality to satisfy players in all types of settings. The field widens even more when you consider the voices of the two different sizes.

Meinl and Thomas have come up with some winners!

THE NUMBERS

13" pair $450
14" pair $525
(615) 227-5090, www.meinlcymbals.com.

Quick Looks

TightScrew Tension Rods

Did you ever find yourself "playing ping-pong" in the middle of a rock gig? You know the feeling. You're playing all-out, slamming into the pocket with sledgehammer force. As the gig progresses, your snare doesn't sound the same as when you started. You tap the batter head near the lugs and find that most of the tension points sound like "ping," but when you tap the spots where the rimshots land, you hear "pong."

If you've been taking notes during the past few years, you know that this phenomenon is due to heavy playing momentarily reducing the pressure on those tension rods, allowing them to loosen in response to shell vibration. Various manufacturers have dealt with this problem over the years, using such things as locking nuts against the lugs or molded plastic heads that go on the rods to keep them in place. These solutions can take extra time and effort, and can interfere with fine-tuning capabilities. Carl Scott Percussion has come up with something different that does the job without the drawbacks.

The TightScrew is a non-loosening tension rod that is designed to stay right where you put it. It features a small channel cut along the length of the rod where the threads go into the lug. The channel is filled with something that looks like nylon, and the friction of this substance against the threads inside the lug casing keeps the rod in place. This technology is used on Apache helicopters to prevent parts from loosening under extreme vibration and temperature conditions.

To test how well the TightScrew rods worked, I replaced two rods on my snare and laid into it. The TightScrew rods stayed right in place, and I didn't have to do any retuning during the test period. I appreciated having infinite control over my tuning, without the constraints of a device that uses a plastic edge or ball-bearing click to hold the rod in place.

Carl Scott says that if you play at light to moderate volumes, you only need to replace the rods positioned immediately under your sticks. For higher volume levels they suggest that you replace all the rods on the rim. Once this is done, you shouldn't need to do anything until the head stretches. The rods come with a 30-day money-back guarantee, which should be plenty of time to determine if you'll have a problem. The rods on my test snare remain where I first tuned them, and I haven't had to touch them since.

TightScrew rods are available in three lengths: 1⅝" (42 mm), 2" (52 mm), and 2½" (65 mm). They're priced at $9.95 for a three pack, $27.95 for ten, and $99.95 for a package of fifty rods. I think they're worth it; you can get tight and stay loose at the same time.

(760) 415-7358, www.tightscrew.com.

Chap Ostrander

Istanbul Agop 25th Anniversary Ride Cymbal

A Quarter-Century Of Quality

by Russ Barbone
Photos by Paul Jonason

KEY NOTES
- unique and distinctive "shimmery" tonality
- hand-crafted quality
- limited volume potential and projection

The Istanbul Cymbal Company has been in existence for twenty-five years, in one form or another. (More about that in a moment.) To commemorate this silver anniversary, Istanbul Agop has developed a special hand-made 25th Anniversary ride cymbal. Each cymbal measures 20½" in diameter and comes with a special carrying bag. Only 1,000 serialized cymbals will be made for worldwide consumption.

Ya Can't Tell The Players Without A Scorecard

First, a bit of cymbalmaking history. It's generally accepted that the first Turkish-style cymbals were made in the region of Istanbul in the 16th century. The manufacturing process was a carefully guarded secret handed down from worker to worker—usually within the family that owned the business.

One such worker was Agop Tomurcuk, who started as a nine-year-old apprentice at the original K Zildjian factory in 1950, and was foreman when the plant closed in 1978. In 1980, Agop formed Istanbul Cymbals with the help of his sons Arman and Sarkis, along with partner Mehmet Tamdeger. The company specialized in the manufacture of cymbals according to old-world traditions.

Agop passed away in 1996 as the result of a tragic accident. At that point the company was being pulled in two very different directions. Agop's sons determined to follow in their father's footsteps at Istanbul. To commemorate his place in cymbalmaking history, they adopted his name to use as the brand for all hand-made cymbals. Hence "Istanbul Agop." Mehmet Tamdeger left to form his own company, which became "Istanbul Mehmet."

Back To Our Regular Program

To create the classic, traditional Turkish cymbal sound, Arman and Sarkis Tomurcuk use the "secret recipe" taken from a notebook that their father kept as an apprentice and later as a master cymbalmaker. Casting, lathing, and hammering are done entirely by hand. Arman and Sarkis unearthed Agop's original hammers, which date back some

thirty years. These are now used to make the anniversary models.

One of the first things I do when examining a cymbal is spin it on a slightly tilted stand to check for any weight discrepancies, which frequently occur in large, hand-made cymbals. If a cymbal is "lopsided," it will always settle with the heaviest portion at the bottom. But I found no such situation with our test ride. The shaping, profiling, edge, hole, and overall symmetry were excellent.

Acoustic Performance

The Istanbul Agop 25th Anniversary ride is definitely not a rock cymbal. It's much more suited to jazz, world, or new age music. The bell is 5" in diameter, with a fairly low profile. It adds to the character of the cymbal's overall sound, but isn't bright or ringing when played alone.

Although the sound tended to be on the "shimmering" side of things—especially as compared to many handmade Turkish-style rides—it didn't have the cutting or piercing quality you'd want for loud situations. It would, however, excel in quiet jazz, small clubs, or close-miked studio formats.

I attribute the ride's shimmering sound to the inclusion of silver in the mix—although I cannot confirm this. It doesn't sound like a typical medium or medium-heavy ping ride. Instead, it leans toward the lighter, "wetter" sound of a medium-light ride, with a controlled wash. Brushwork on this cymbal, played behind a small acoustic band, was first rate. I also favored traditional wood-tip sticks, in order to bring out the cymbal's old-world sound. Nylon-tipped models just didn't sound at home here.

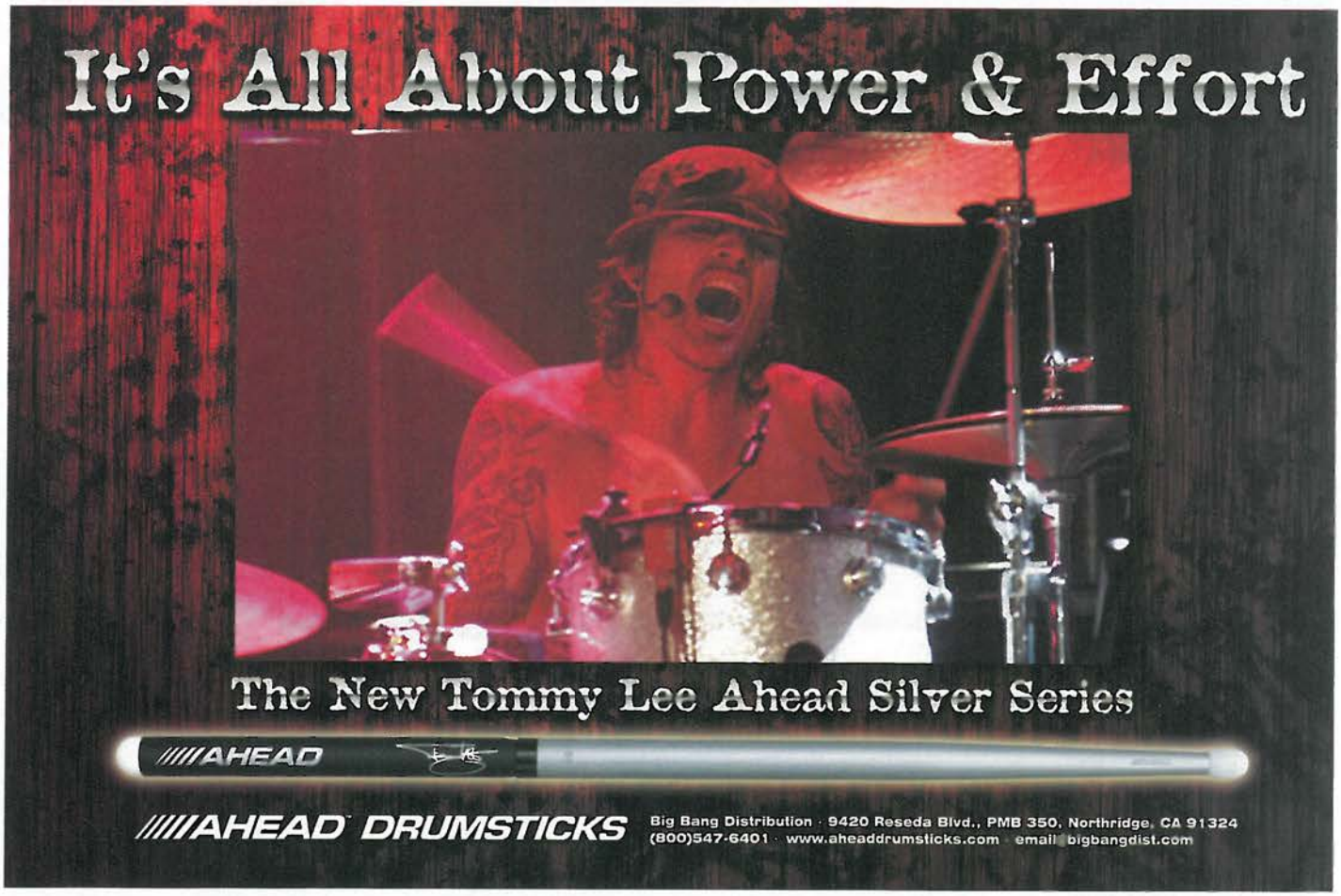
Conclusion

Because every 25th Anniversary ride will have its own unique character, slight acoustic variations will exist from ride to ride. This is normal with hand-made cymbals, and should not be construed as poor quality. There simply is no way to exactly duplicate every aspect of the manufacturing process.

Each 25th Anniversary ride will be as unique as the individual player using it. All in all, this cymbal could be a very nice addition to your kit, and one whose limited-edition status might allow it to increase in value over the long haul.

THE NUMBERS

20½" 25th Anniversary ride cymbal.....$599
(213) 624-4264, www.Istanbulcymbals.com.



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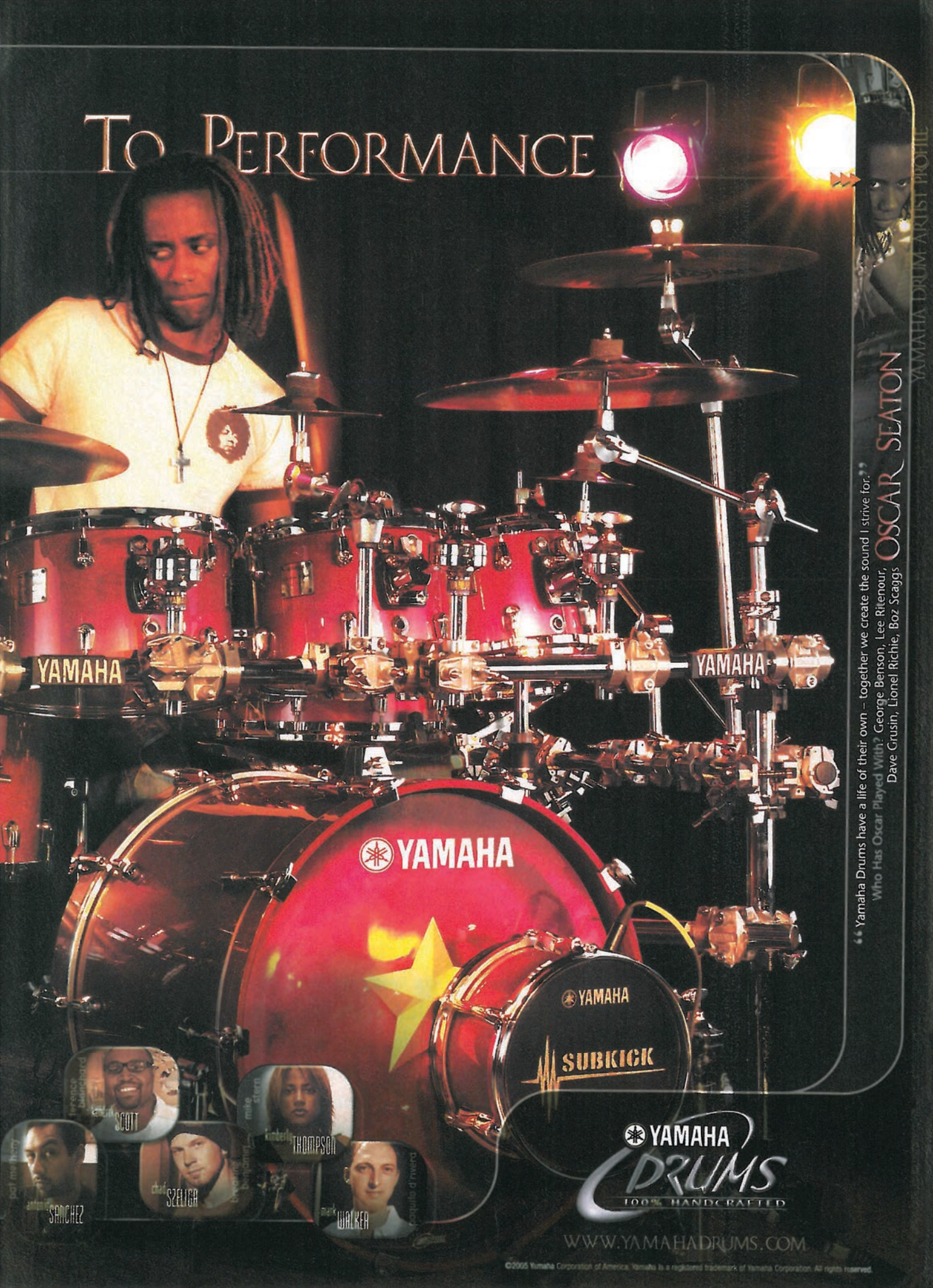

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Roy Haynes

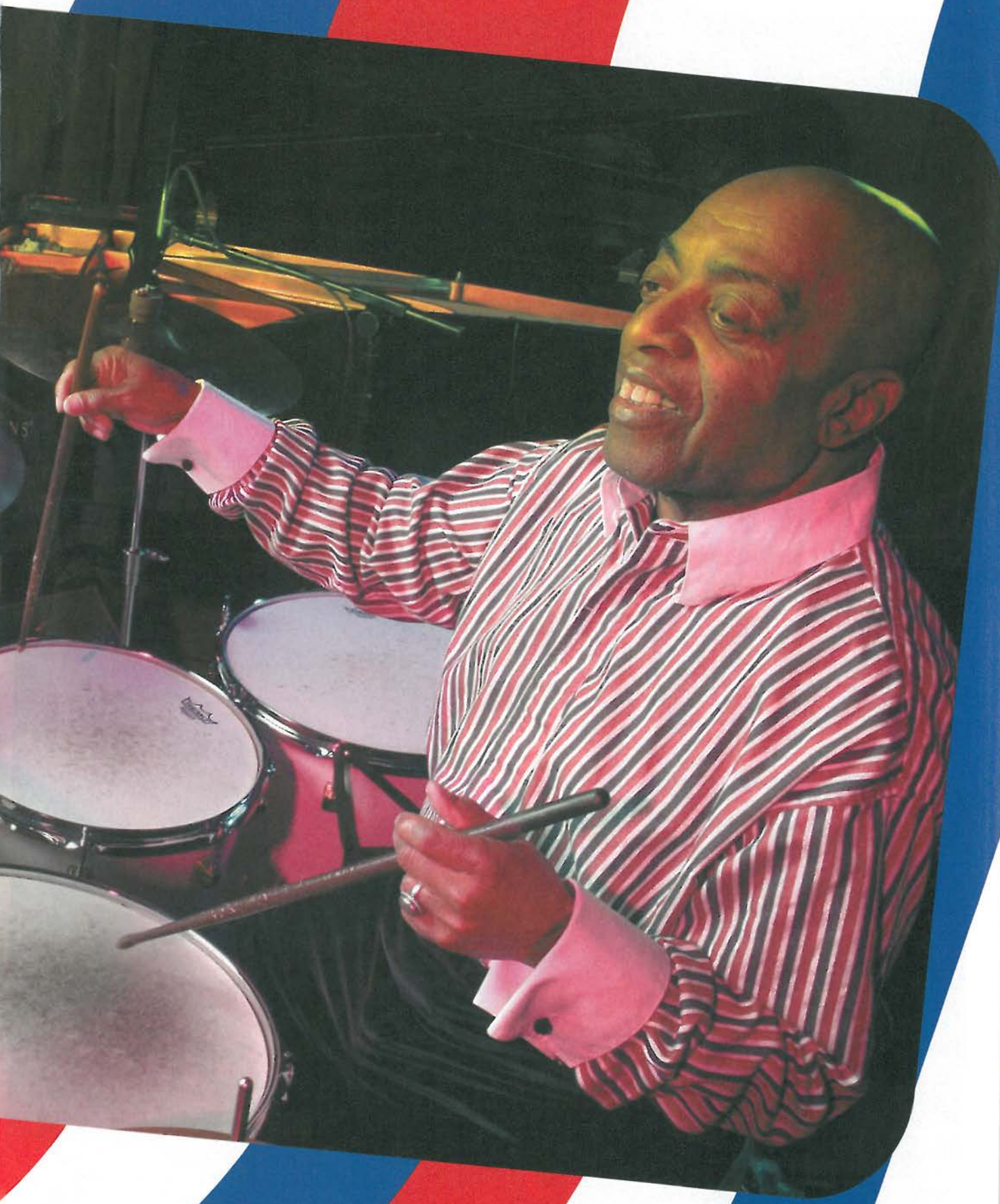
A Legend At 80

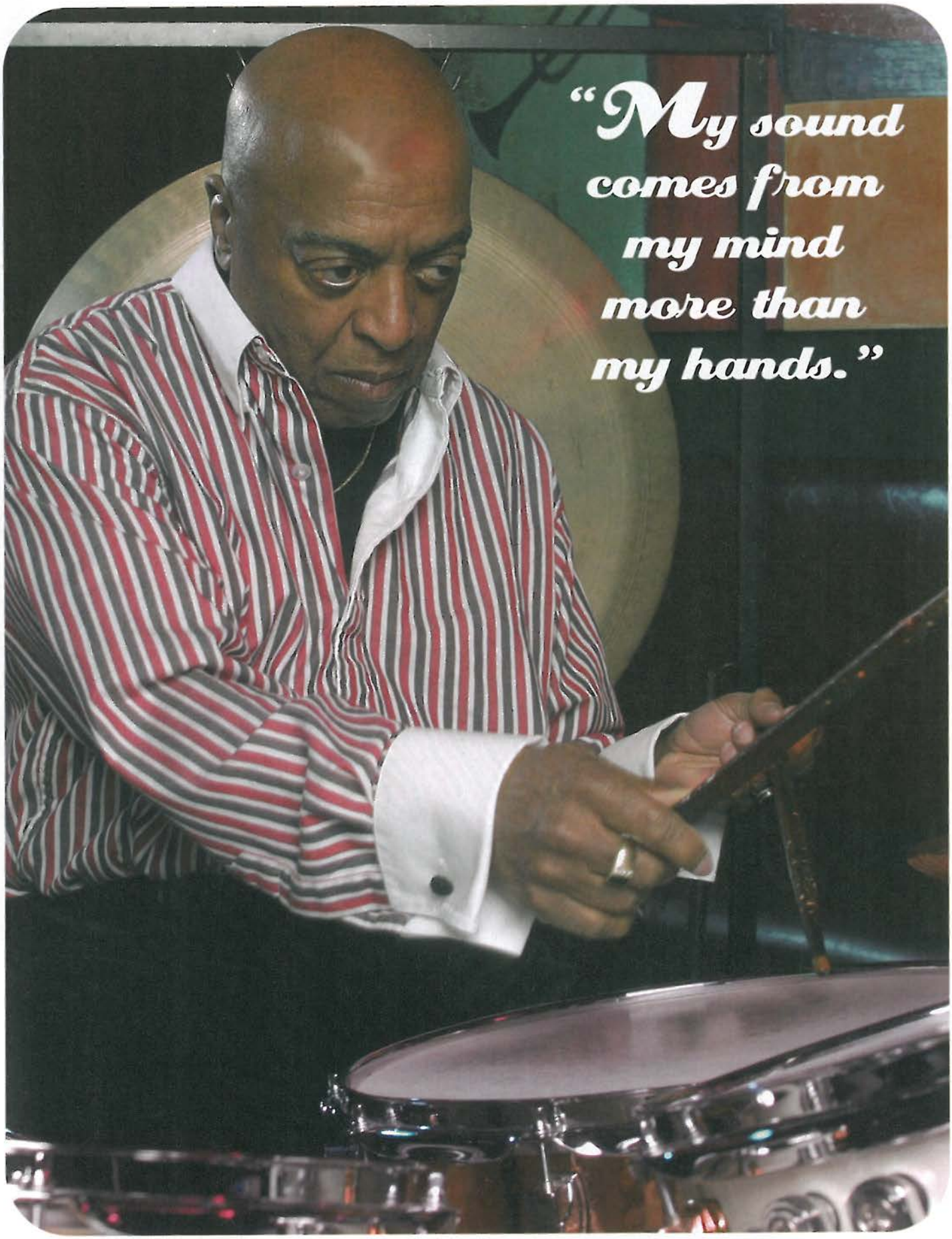
Story by Ira Gitler
Photos by Paul La Raia

Editor's note: Roy Haynes is without question one of the most important jazz drummers in history. His impressive, sixty-year career has included work with such greats as Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Chick Corea, and Pat Metheny, among many others. Haynes continues to be very active as a player, mostly recording and touring with his own group. And this is quite remarkable, considering the fact that earlier this year Roy turned eighty.

To help celebrate this milestone, we thought this a perfect opportunity to "revisit" Mr. Haynes with a cover story. And we asked veteran jazz writer (and longtime friend) Ira Gitler to interview Roy. The following story reveals a lot about this master of the instrument, one of the hippest drummers ever to pick up sticks.

It's not always easy to pin down a person as busy as Roy Haynes for an interview because, when he isn't occupied with his profession, he's inclined to relax at home (in the 516 area code) and not motor into New York City. However, earlier this year, during his eightieth-birthday (March 13) week of performances at the Village Vanguard, *Modern Drummer* had arranged an afternoon photo shoot for this article, and I took advantage of it to sit down with this great artist.




"My sound comes from my mind more than my hands."

I might as well begin with the first time I heard Roy Haynes in person, because I've often recounted to him my exhilaration and delight on that premier occasion. It was in 1949 at one of those late-afternoon into early-evening Sunday jam sessions that had become part of the New York jazz scene at least as far back as the '30s. The scene was the Hotel Markwell on West 47th Street. Saxophonist/bandleader Georgie Auld had taken over the bar and renamed it Tin Pan Alley. Roy was sitting in and soon began to arrest my attention and amaze me with his four- and eight-bar constructions in conversational exchanges with the horn players, which were called "chase" choruses at the time.

"I was developing it as I was doing it," Haynes explains. He went on to think in terms of twelve and sixteen bars, extending these highly rhythmic yet epigrammatic gems.

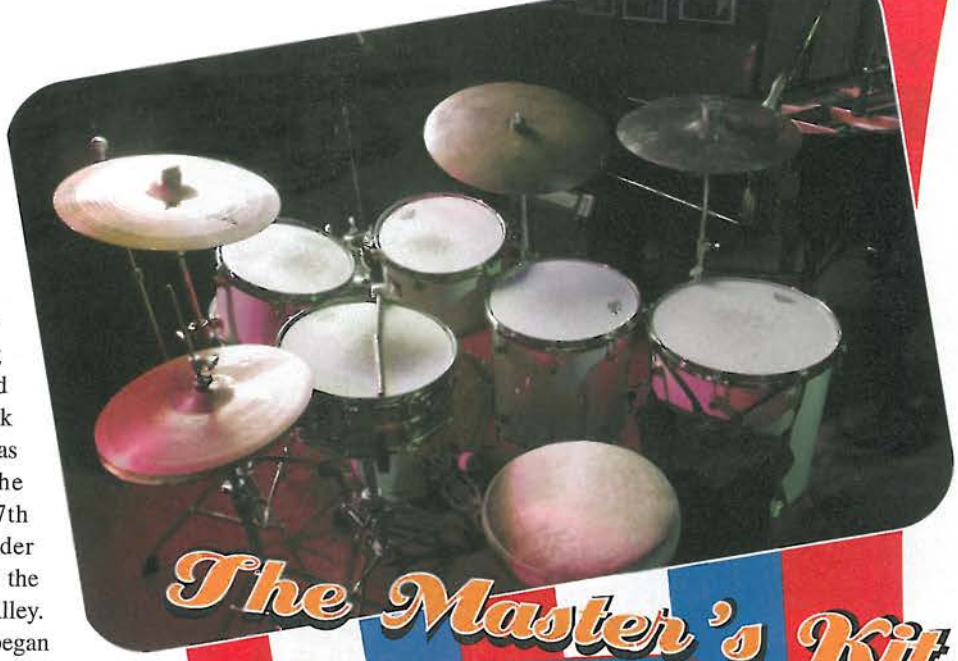
To understand what made Haynes the intuitive musician he is, you have to go back to his formative years. I've written about him a number of times, and I've read many other pieces about him. Perhaps I missed it, but it occurred to me as I made my way down to the Vanguard recently that I'd never read anything about his early childhood, growing up in Roxbury, Massachusetts. When the photographer finished the shoot and Roy and I had sat down on one of the banquettes that run along the club's side wall of the elevated section, my first question went back to the late 1920s.

"I had an older brother," Roy began. "My mother and father were both from Barbados, and Douglas was born there."

After the family moved to America, Roy and his younger brother Vin were born. Doug, according to Roy, was five years older than him. "He didn't get along with my father, seemingly," Roy recalls, "and by the time he was a teenager, he was on the road. He knew a lot about the Savoy Ballroom and about the bands. He had all the records; and he was the one who had a pair of drumsticks in the house. That's where I picked up my first pair.

"Doug didn't play drums," Roy continues. "He played trumpet. After the war, he got out of the service. The war messed him up. But he did go to the New England Conservatory at the same time as Cecil Taylor."

Haynes cites his brother and "listening to the radio" as the two main influences in his interest in jazz. It was Doug who introduced him to Count Basie's great drummer, Jo Jones. "Jo told me many times that it was my brother who brought me to see him," Roy recalls. "Doug knew everybody. He was my main connection to jazz. And



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- **C.** 8x12 tom
- **D.** 14x14 floor tom
- **E.** 16x16 floor tom
- **F.** 16x18 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
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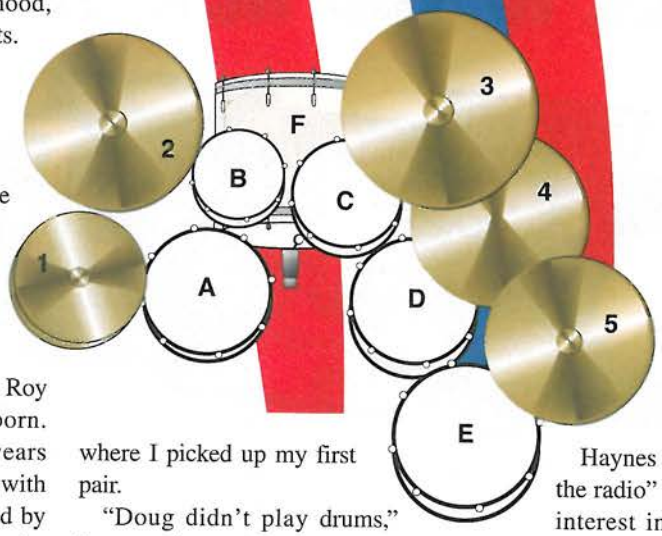
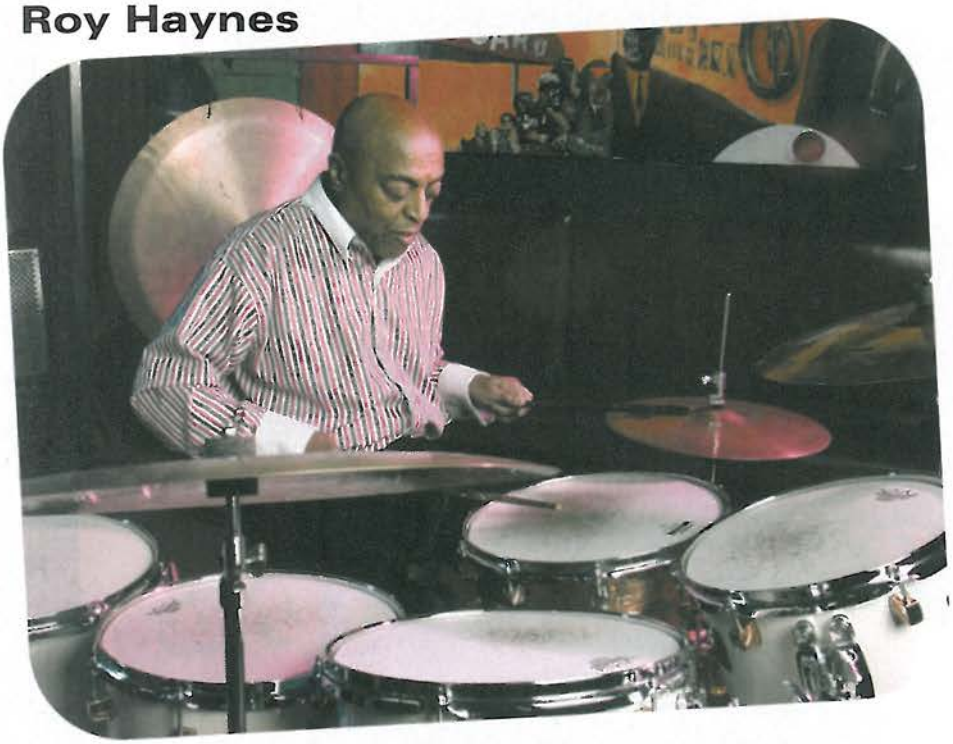
2. 18" A Custom crash
3. 20" K crash ride (not in photo)
4. 18" K Custom Flat Top ride
5. 17" K Dark thin crash

Sticks: Zildjian Roy Haynes Artist Series wood tip





he had a lot of records by Duke, Basie, and Billie Holiday.

"In Roxbury, an Irish family lived on one side of us and a French Canadian lady lived on the other. She played the piano every Sunday—Gershwin, Broadway tunes. And I heard Art Tatum and Bing Crosby records on the local radio station. Across the street, there was a synagogue. I heard them blow the ram's horn and also sing religious music—chanting after a funeral."

But the die was cast for Haynes when he picked up his brother's drumsticks. "I just *knew* I was a drummer," he says. "I was banging on everything in the house. I may have been eight or nine when my father wanted me to get some drum lessons."

Haynes senior, who had been a church organist in Barbados, arranged for his son to study with a man who lived across the street. "He gave me a couple of lessons on the snare drum," Roy says. "It was the first time I ever heard the 'mamma-daddy' rhythm."

Roy learned much later that his teacher had been Herbie Wright, the drummer with James Reese Europe's 369th Infantry Regiment Band. In addition to Wright, another drummer who was an early influence of Roy's was Bobby Donaldson. He was three years older than Roy and lived on the same block. Donaldson went on to work with Andy Kirk, Lucky Millinder, and everyone from Benny Goodman, Eddie Condon, and Dorothy Donegan to Herbie Mann, Curtis Fuller, and Charlie Byrd.

Did Haynes participate in his schools' bands? "I was in all of them. I was so hip," he says with a smile. "In junior high I wanted to be the drum major, tell 'em what to do."

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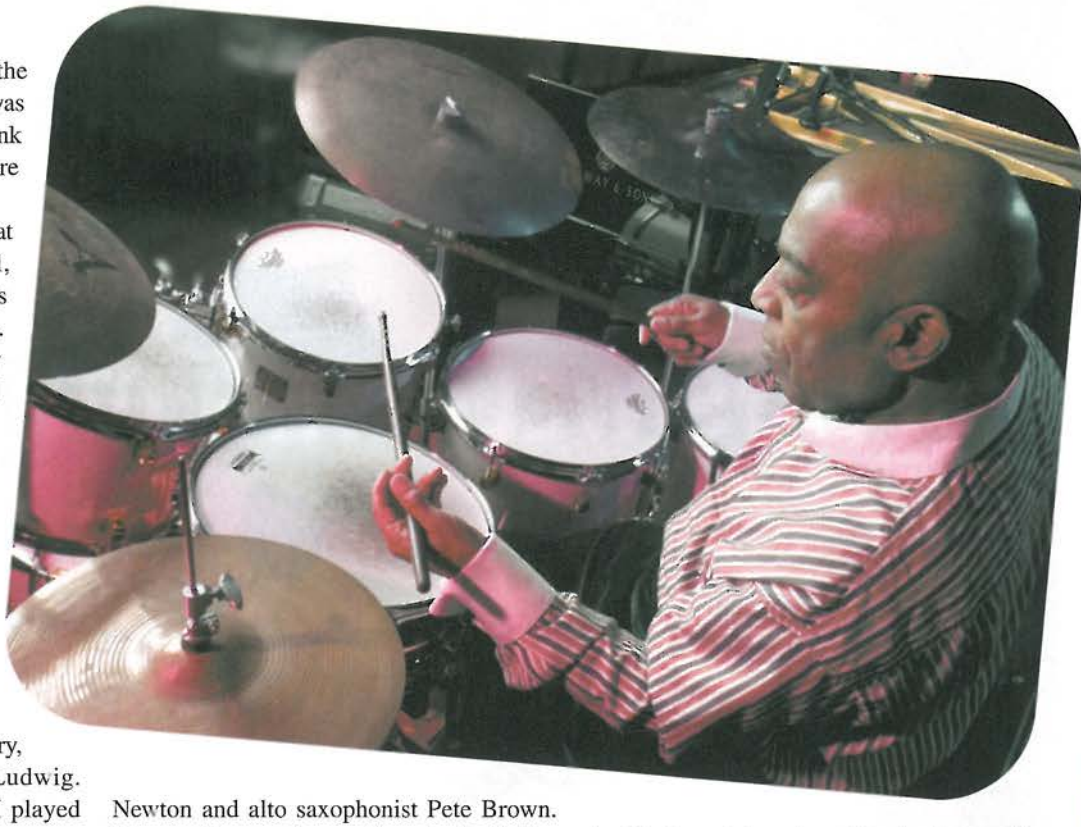
Roy Haynes



Roy did put in some time with the drum & bugle corps, but says, "I was never a rudimental drummer, so I think my sound comes from my mind more than my hands."

Those hands got him into trouble at Roxbury Memorial High School, nicknamed "the Synagogue" for its predominantly Jewish student body. "One time I was drumming with my hands on the desk," Roy admits. "I had the class in the palm of my hand. But the teacher actually sent a note to the principal. My father used to say that I was just nervous. I left later in that third year and finished school hanging out with Lester Young and Charlie Parker."

There was little more formal study in Haynes' future, but quite a lot of first-hand experience. In a short stay at the Boston Conservatory, Haynes took lessons from Karl Ludwig. "During that period," Roy says, "I played with Sidney Bechet at the Savoy on Massachusetts Avenue."

Other gigs with signal players during this period (1943–44) involved trumpeter Frankie Newton and alto saxophonist Pete Brown. Haynes also spent some time in the Sabby Lewis band, a Boston favorite of the time. "There were no drum parts," Roy recalls, "so I was really impressed when a guy named Joe Booker sat in and read the first trumpet's part. When I left I was replaced by Osie Johnson."

Haynes' next job was on Martha's

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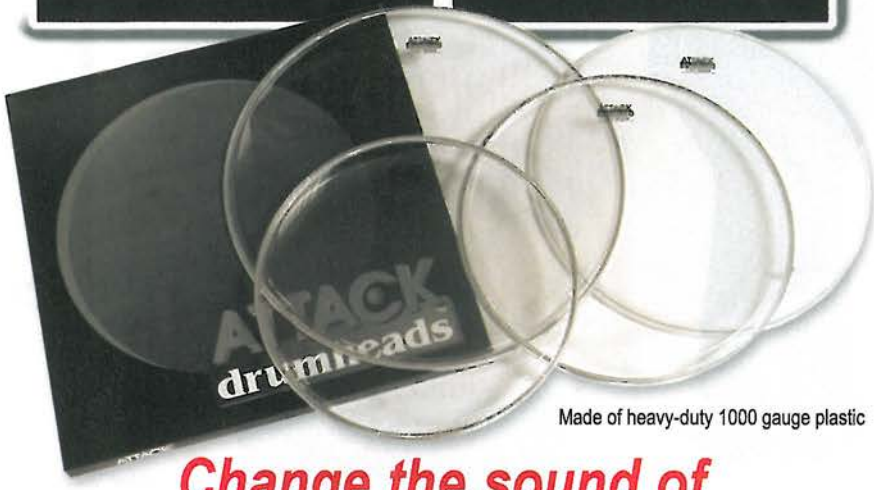

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Roy Haynes

Vineyard with a band led by Phil Edmond that played stock arrangements. "In those days we had two unions, black and white. I got a special delivery letter, sent to Local 535 on Massachusetts Avenue, from Luis Russell in New York, asking me to join his band. I wanted to go to New York with a big band anyhow. I sent him a telegram saying that I was interested but that I couldn't join until after Labor Day because the Edmond job was for the whole summer."

Russell summoned Haynes on the recommendation of Boston-born Charlie Holmes, a fine alto saxophonist in the Johnny Hodges style, who had played with Russell's band. "Charlie Holmes told Russell about me. He believed in me," Roy says. "As a matter of fact, I stayed at Charlie's house for about a month after I got to New York. Luis sent me a one-way train ticket—and I'm still here."

Haynes' debut was an auspicious one at the Savoy Ballroom. While he was with Russell he was borrowed by Louis Armstrong, who had fronted Russell's band from 1935 to 1943. "In '46, I made a short tour of tobacco warehouses in the South with Louie," Roy remembers. All of this was quite an introduction to the jazz world at large for the young drummer, and a period of invaluable experience.

In 1947 he made a transition from Russell's orchestra to the combo of Lester Young. For musicians of Haynes' generation, who had grown up loving the Basie band and the "President" of the tenor saxophone, Lester Young, it had to be a special time. Roy was with Prez into 1949. "I was the instigator, like Tony [Williams] in Miles' band," he says. "The only reason I left Prez is that he went with Norman Granz's Jazz At The Philharmonic, and that's when I joined Kai Winding."

In August of that year Roy recorded for Prestige with trombonist Winding's sextet. Earlier in the month he was on Bud Powell's quintet date for Blue Note that included Fats Navarro and Sonny Rollins. In November, again for Prestige, he was in the studio with Wardell Gray's quartet. The kind of crisp, swinging, supportively pulsating, inventive drumming that captivated me at Tin Pan Alley is in strong evidence on all three dates.

"My feeling was the thing they liked," pinpoints Haynes in talking about the many and varied leaders in his dossier. "When I first joined Prez, he was thrilled because he thought I was swinging. He didn't particular-

ly like drummers to get too involved, and I was doing different stuff with the left foot and left hand. I was dancing, but it was *there*. And that's the thing, I'm sure, that carried me all these years, playing with all these different people.

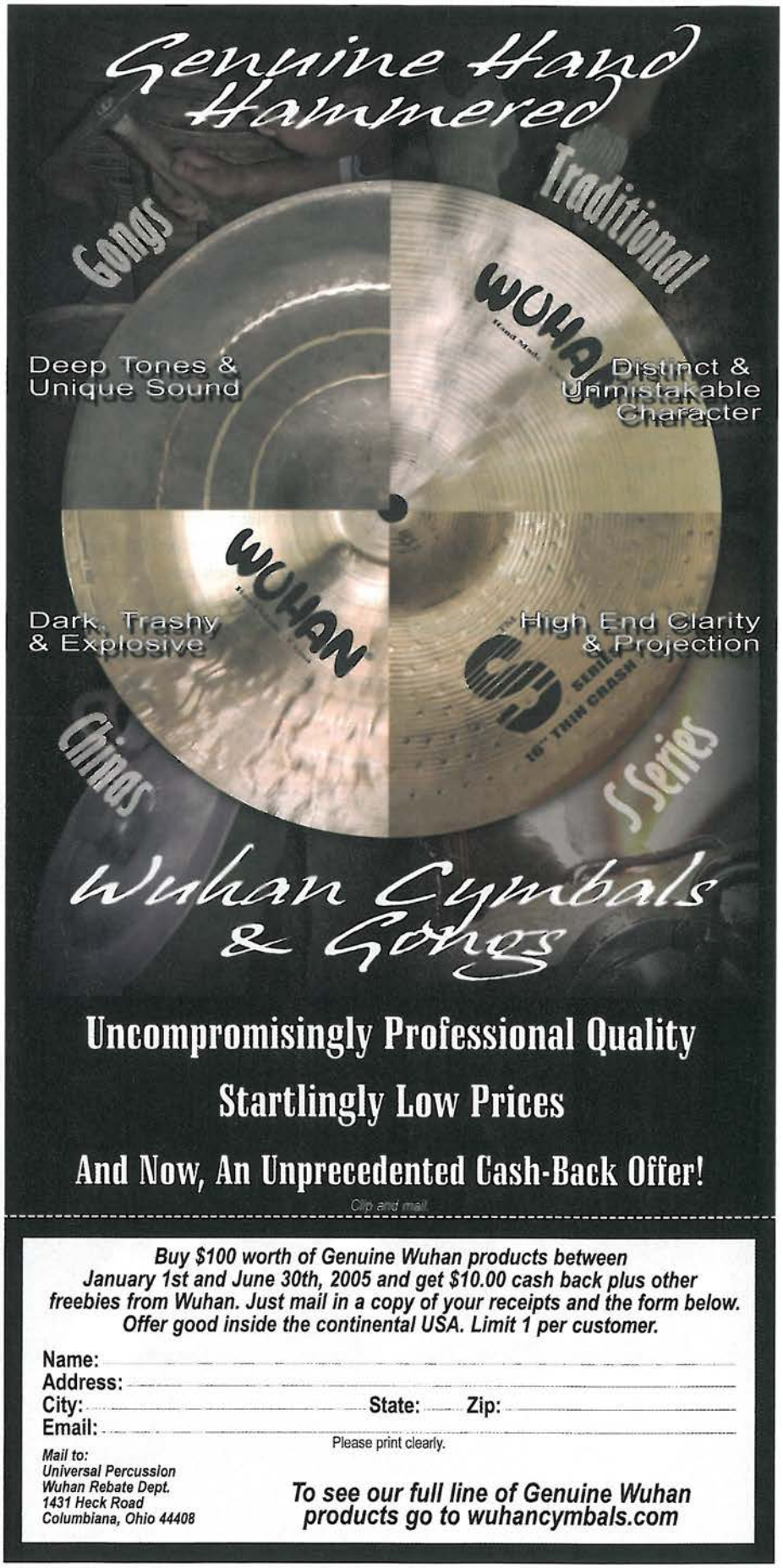
"Maybe lots of times I *suggested* the beat. As Mingus used to say, 'Roy Haynes, you didn't play the beat, you *suggested* the beat.'"

It was also in '49 that Roy became part of Charlie Parker's quintet. He recounts the circumstances in an interview for a book I wrote in the '60s, now called *The Masters Of Bebop*: "Miles [Davis] had just left Bird and went into Soldier Meyers' club in Brooklyn with his own group, and I was part of it. Well, after Miles left Bird, Max [Roach] wanted to leave too.

"After Soldier Meyers', I went into the Orchid room—the old Onyx—on 52nd Street, first with a trio of Bud Powell, Nelson Boyd, and me. Later Monte Kay added Miles, Sonny Stitt, and Wardell and made a group out of it. Bird was still working across the street at the Three Deuces, and Max would come over and see us swinging like crazy. So then he cut out from Bird, got his own group, and started playing at Soldier Meyers'. Max came over and sounded me out about working with Bird. I dug Bird, but at that time I wasn't particularly enthused about working with him. I don't know why. But I gave Max one of those *comme ci, comme ca* answers, and he said, 'All right, later for you. I'll get Kansas Fields.' But then Bird came over and hired me himself.

"So after our gig closed," Roy continues, "I went over and worked with Bird. After we'd been there a couple of weeks, Bud Powell came in opposite us with a trio with Max on drums. I said, 'Uh-oh.' I was really going to have to be at my best. So one time Bird called 'Salt Peanuts,' and I had never played that with Bird before. You know how in the Three Deuces, right near the drums, there was an open door where the guys would come on the bandstand? Well, Max was standing right in the doorway. I didn't know that right after the piano solo, there was an extended drum solo—they used to feature the drums. Max turned to me and said, 'Drum solo.' He helped me out so much that night. I guess I played my best, because he was gassed, and I was gassed that he helped me.

"When Bird was feeling good, he'd play some very fast tempos. I also played some



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fast tempos with other people—Bud Powell especially—up at Minton's when we were jamming when I was real young."

At this point in the conversation Roy points out, "A lot of the people we've been talking about didn't ask me to play certain things. Somebody like Chick Corea, for instance, didn't tell me what to do. It would be up to me to decide what I would *choose* to do. I did a record date with Dave Brubeck once and he didn't say anything. Years later, he told me that he liked it."

After playing with Parker and then Stan Getz, Haynes went with Sarah Vaughan's trio in '53 and stayed with her into '58. "The singers I played with were so great," Roy enthuses. "Playing with Sarah Vaughan reminded me of playing with Charlie Parker—same as playing with Billie Holiday reminded me of Prez, and playing with Ella Fitzgerald reminded me of playing with the Basie band."

While Roy was with Sarah, some critics and critical fans were voicing opinions that the long stay could be dulling his pure jazz chops. He quickly dispelled any such thoughts. In April '58, after leaving Vaughan, he hooked up with pianist Phineas Newborn in a trio setting at Birdland. And then, in the fall at the Five Spot, he, Phineas, and Paul Chambers did a Monday night gig for a while. (Check out *We Three* on New Jazz, now in the Concord catalog.)

Between the two trio engagements, Haynes played with Thelonious Monk at the Five Spot. "I first met Monk when he was playing with Coleman Hawkins," Roy recalls. "Monk was another special challenge. He would always say, 'Drummers can only play three tempos.' His tempos were usually *between* those three tempos, and he knew that. His tunes were written in a certain way. And he would say that drummers would either change the tempo or bring it up." (Roy is on two *Live At The Five Spot* Riverside recordings with Monk, also now in the Concord catalog.)

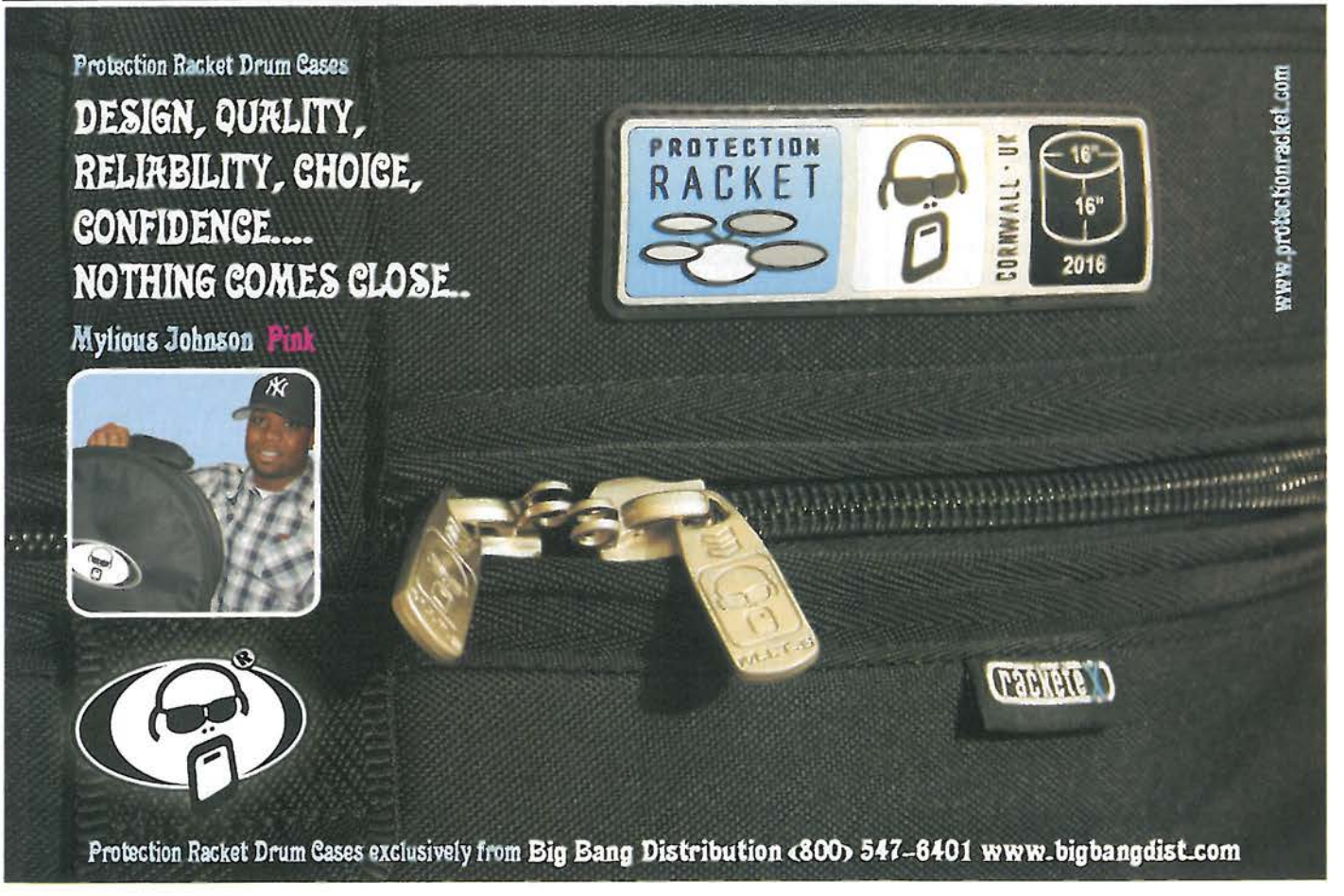
"Now, with my Fountain Of Youth quartet, we play some Monk tunes—I love his writing—but I decorate them the way I want to."

Yet another giant that benefited from Haynes' support was John Coltrane. In Trane's classic quartet of the first half of the '60s, his drummer of choice when Elvin Jones wasn't available was Roy. There's no doubt that part of Elvin's development of stating the beat all over the drumkit came from listening to Roy. They did it differently, but Roy, whose beat Trane described as "spreading, permeating," was the only other drummer who could elevate Trane, as he did in the version of "My Favorite Things" from the Newport Jazz Festival of 1963.

"I could do probably more with Coltrane—or I *did* more with Coltrane—than I did with anyone else," Roy says. "Not that anyone else couldn't do what I was doing," he adds modestly, "but I probably did more there than I did with Bird. Playing one song for eighteen minutes, I'd *better* find something that's not stagnant. It was also faster than the original version he did."

I wasn't about to lose the opportunity to talk with Roy about drummers who inspired him, and he responded immediately with, "Early on, Jo Jones. Basie was at the RKO Boston, and I went backstage and told them that Jo Jones was my father. So I was ahead of that whole thing when they started calling him Papa Jo. I called him my father when I was a teenager, but I never did call him Papa Jo.

"I met Big Sid [Catlett] in Boston, and *heard* Kenny Clarke when he was playing in



Boston with Red Allen. The emcee didn't introduce him. He said, 'Just ask Jo Jones about Kenny.'

"I bought my first car in 1950," Roy recalls. "Big Sid was living up on Amsterdam Avenue. He wanted me to drive him home, and it was a pleasure. He was loose. He did a lot of cross-stick stuff, one stick on top of another. I still do that. He could swing.

"I met Art Blakey when I was seventeen. He was with Fletcher Henderson. They would come to Boston to play at the Tic Toc. Then Art came to stay. That's where he joined Billy Eckstine's band. He used to call me his son. We were very close—way back.

"There are a lot of players you never hear about," Roy continues. "You don't hear anything about Shadow Wilson. People only seem to think in terms of soloists. They think you have to play a solo to be a great drummer."

I threw some other names at Roy—Philly Joe Jones, Louie Bellson, Buddy Rich. His response again was quick: "I used to go to Philadelphia a lot with Luis Russell. That's when I met Jimmy Heath in '45 or '46. I didn't know about Philly Joe until '50. I remember Louie Bellson and that thing he did with the two bass drums, 'Skin Deep' with Duke. That was *bad*.

"One time Buddy Rich and I had words," Roy continues. "He had heard me at the Savoy with Prez and liked me. Then, sometime later, he heard me at Birdland and said I was playing the 'cool' style. It was at a time when Max was getting a lot of attention, and I don't think Buddy liked that. But the next time I saw Buddy I was working with Bird at the Bandbox [on Broadway nearby Birdland], opposite him. Bird gave me a solo, and when Buddy picked up the mic' at the beginning of his set, he praised me. After that we became friendly, driving our convertibles on the Westside Highway. Sometimes he would say, 'C'mon, let's go see the Yankees.'"

Everyone in jazz is always talking about getting "your own sound." It's something to strive for and it's not an easy thing to accomplish. Freddie Gruber, one-time boy wonder of the drums from the Bronx and now a respected drum teacher, states, "Roy Haynes is someone I've known since I was sixteen—for three-quarters of my life. I first heard him when I was walking west on 52nd Street, from the Famous Door to the White Rose Bar on the corner of Sixth Avenue. When I passed the Three Deuces—the doors of the clubs were left open in those days because they didn't have air-conditioning—I was stopped cold by the crisp sound of a four-and-a-half-inch snare drum, together with its partner-in-crime bass drum and a ride cymbal that was woven in an integral way into the line of the music—and most of all, swung.

"It's hard to explain what Roy does," Freddie says, "but it's *magical*. There isn't anything of his you can practice, because it comes out of the music. Listening and conceptualizing—that equals self expression, which then transcends the industry and becomes art."

Is developing a sound particularly difficult for drummers? Roy answers, "Actually, I'm not even always aware of these things. With me, I'm sure I was a natural drummer. I'm not saying a lot of other people are *not*, but I didn't analyze a lot of stuff. I was always serious about what I was doing, and I had a definite approach.

"I'm always tuning the drums," Roy continues, "more now than ever. I'm tuning the drums all night. I'm looking for something in there. A lot of other drummers—first of all their bass drums sound alike. They pad them up with a lot of crap. I stayed away from that.

"And I like a certain cymbal—the ride cymbal. I sort of introduced the flat ride, which a lot of drummers knew back in the '60s. It was made by Paiste, but I'm with Zildjian, so I got them to make me a flat. That's what I'm using up there now [gestures toward the bandstand]. I think it's 20". They made me some 18s that I used for the past couple of years. It's a sound I like, kind of individual. Doesn't sound like everyone else's. I sort of introduced it with Chick Corea on *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*. But I'm still working on it. I'm still looking. I went to the Zildjian factory twice last month."

Haynes has long been known as a fashion plate, but he was into it long before he was recognized by the public. "When I was a teenager, I used to come down to New York just to buy clothes," he says. "I could get something on 125th Street that I couldn't get in Boston. I was always dressing differently. When I came to New York with Luis Russell, I was living on 149th Street, and Babs Gonzales was around. He introduced me to a guy they called Charlie La, Charlie Lasister. His father had a tailor shop and Charlie was

into dressing. I was wearing pegged pants and he got me into straight bottoms, no cuffs, at the time when people were beginning to wear that style."

In the '50s, Roy took to buying his clothes at the Andover Shop in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Boston newspaper columnist and jazz fan George Frazier, who patronized the same shop, named Roy among the forty best-dressed men in America in an *Esquire* magazine article. The hip Haynes style continued to be updated over the years and carried over to the cars he has driven: Cadillac El Dorados, Mercedes 500s, and his 1974, white, gull-wing doored Bricklin. Now he drives a Dodge Magnum, a "slick station wagon."

Then there's Haynes the family man with a legacy. His oldest son, Craig, is a drummer who played with Sun Ra for many years. Son Graham (trumpet, cornet, flugelhorn) has played and recorded with Roy, as well as on his own. And daughter Leslie has produced two offspring who reflect the musicality of the clan. Leah, her daughter, is a promising bassoonist at Juilliard, and eighteen-year-old drummer Marcus Gilmore has shown his burgeoning talent with trumpeters Roy Hargrove and Nicholas Payton, and in collaboration with his proud granddad at Jazz At Lincoln Center's opening program earlier this year.

Gilmore is a student at the Manhattan School of Music. His dormitory is right about where Roy lived at the time he was Charlie Parker's drummer in *Bird With Strings*. Talk about full circle.

Haynes, who has led his own groups since the '60s, is enjoying the active schedule and excitement of his Fountain Of Youth quartet: Marcus Strickland, tenor and soprano saxophones, bass clarinet; Martin Bejerano, piano; and John Sullivan, bass. "To watch these guys grow right in front of you is amazing," Roy says. "Sometimes I don't even have to talk. I just cue them with something I play. That's love."

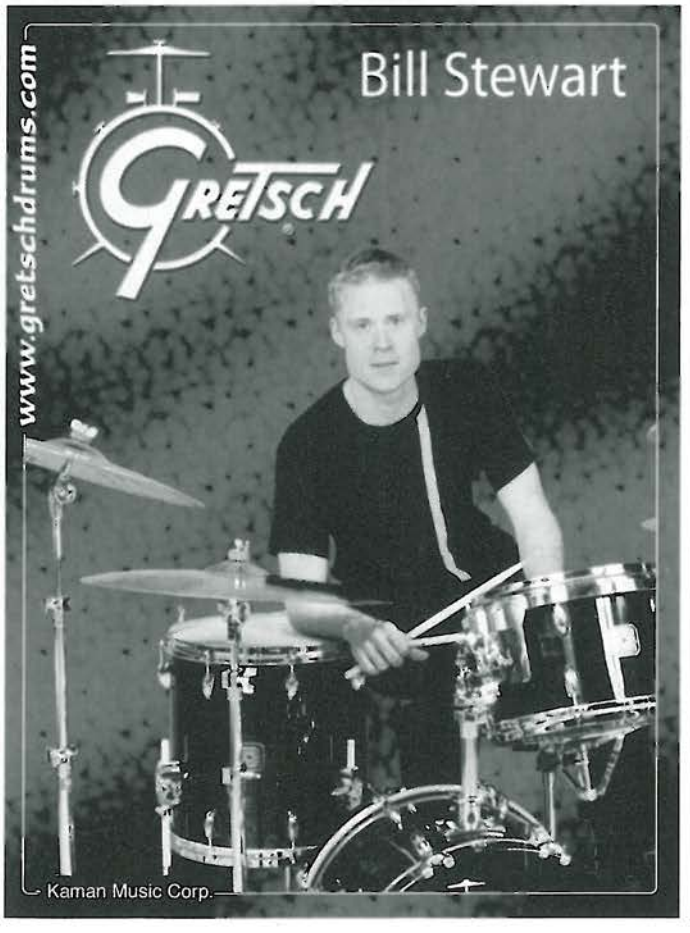
Strickland says that the experience of playing with Haynes has had, "without question, a profound effect. I'm very lucky—we all are—to be with this legendary person. He teaches by example, hardly says anything on the bandstand—but he will let you know. He has relentless energy on and off the bandstand. Keeping up with him at the airport, you have to move fast. If I reach eighty I hope I'm like him."

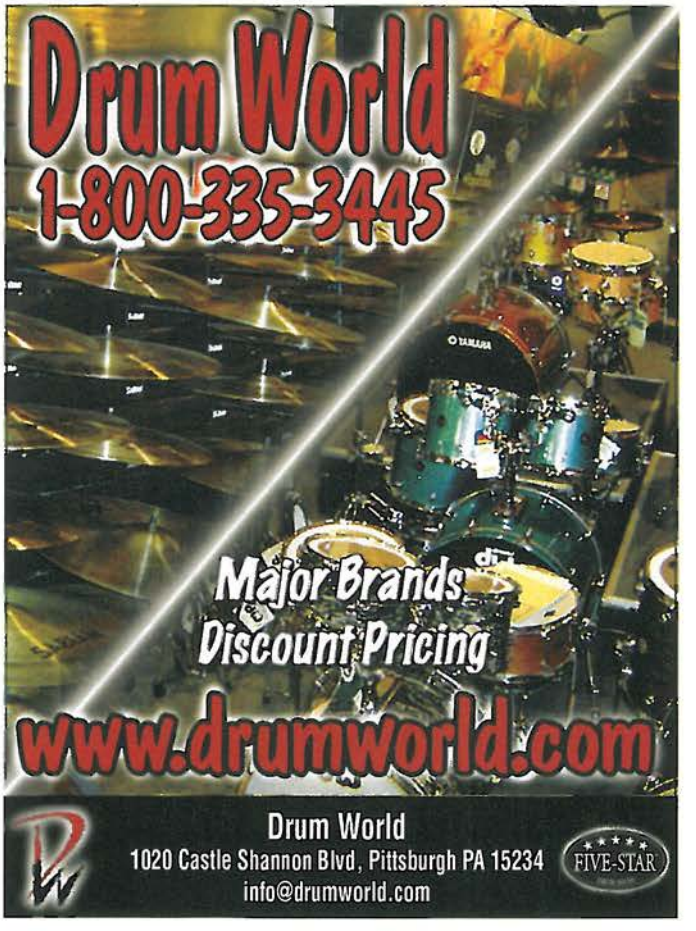
Strickland continues, "I've learned so much from him: his approach to melody—learning the melody and the lyrics, playing the melody with authority, phrasing—his writing/arranging, dissecting the tune and then putting it back together...and then there's his true command of the band."

Gruber describes Roy as "grounded, sensible—a gentleman. Knows where he's at, knows where he's going, knows what he's doing. And at this particular time all the accolades are coming, a little later than they should have."

"Now I'd rather do my own projects than play with other groups, set my own pace," says Haynes, the major drummer who once yearned for the post of drum major. "This way I can play my own thing."

Wanna hear cool tracks by Roy Haynes? Tune in to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.





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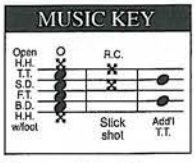
Roy Haynes

Style & Analysis

by John Riley

MUSIC KEY



Just a few short years after Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, Kenny Clarke, and Max Roach shook up the music world with their major musical innovation known as bebop, a young man from Roxbury, Massachusetts arrived on the fertile New York music scene. Roy Haynes' jet age concept and spirit has helped to propel jazz into the twenty-first century.

Haynes' drumming is simultaneously supportive and provoking, powerful yet transparent, and most definitely spontaneous and swinging. Roy is often cited as the first truly modern drummer, as he was a pioneer in breaking up the jazz cymbal rhythm. Mel Lewis stated, "Roy was the original avant-garde drummer. Building on what Max Roach did, Roy was really nervy and stretched the music even further by taking a lot of chances crossing the barline. He was doing in the '40s what Elvin started doing later on."

Basically self-taught, Roy was initially inspired by music he heard on the radio. Chick Webb, Shadow Wilson, and Jo Jones were his first idols. Later he dug Max Roach and Art Blakey, recalling, "I wanted to catch up to them."

Roy's buoyant beat has confidently accompanied a virtual who's who of jazz luminaries, from Louis Armstrong to Sarah Vaughan to Pat Metheny. ("Yeah, I covered the waterfront," he says.) Roy's playing fits these different musical settings because he really *listens* to everyone while he plays. He always finds a way to paint his rhythms into their music to inspire soloists and to enliven and enhance the whole ensemble sound.

Roy is never dictatorial or constricting. He is always supportive, bubbling, and inventive. His playing is simultaneously gregarious and minimalistic. For years his band was known as The Roy Haynes Hip Ensemble, and everything about Roy is hip: His band, sound, feel, comping, personality, and wardrobe are all *super* hip.

At a clinic, Roy was asked how he came up with his "modern" concept, and he modestly replied, "I'm just a swing drummer like Papa Jo." To this day Roy is a great exponent of playing time on the hi-hat reminiscent of Papa Jo Jones. However, even from his early recordings with Lester Young, Roy has had his own distinctive approach. His sound is lighter than that of Max or Art. His cymbal beat and comping, while still dancing, are much less symmetrical and riff-oriented. And his solos are full of surprising combinations of swinging phrases, uniquely placed stops and starts, and double-time, timbale-like bursts.

In the early '90s I played with John Scofield opposite Roy, Pat Metheny, and Dave Holland. Backstage I asked Dave, who was playing with Roy for the first time, what surprised him about Roy's playing. Dave responded, "It's what he *doesn't* play that surprises me." I took that to mean that Roy doesn't play the obvious and he's always propelling by being spontaneous.

Roy's Sound And Feel

Roy's drum tuning is high and, combined with his light but firm touch, he generates a very crisp, staccato sound—the "snap, crackle, pop" he is known for. His super crisp snare drum sound is maintained by continually tightening the top drumhead and snugging the snares against the bottom head.

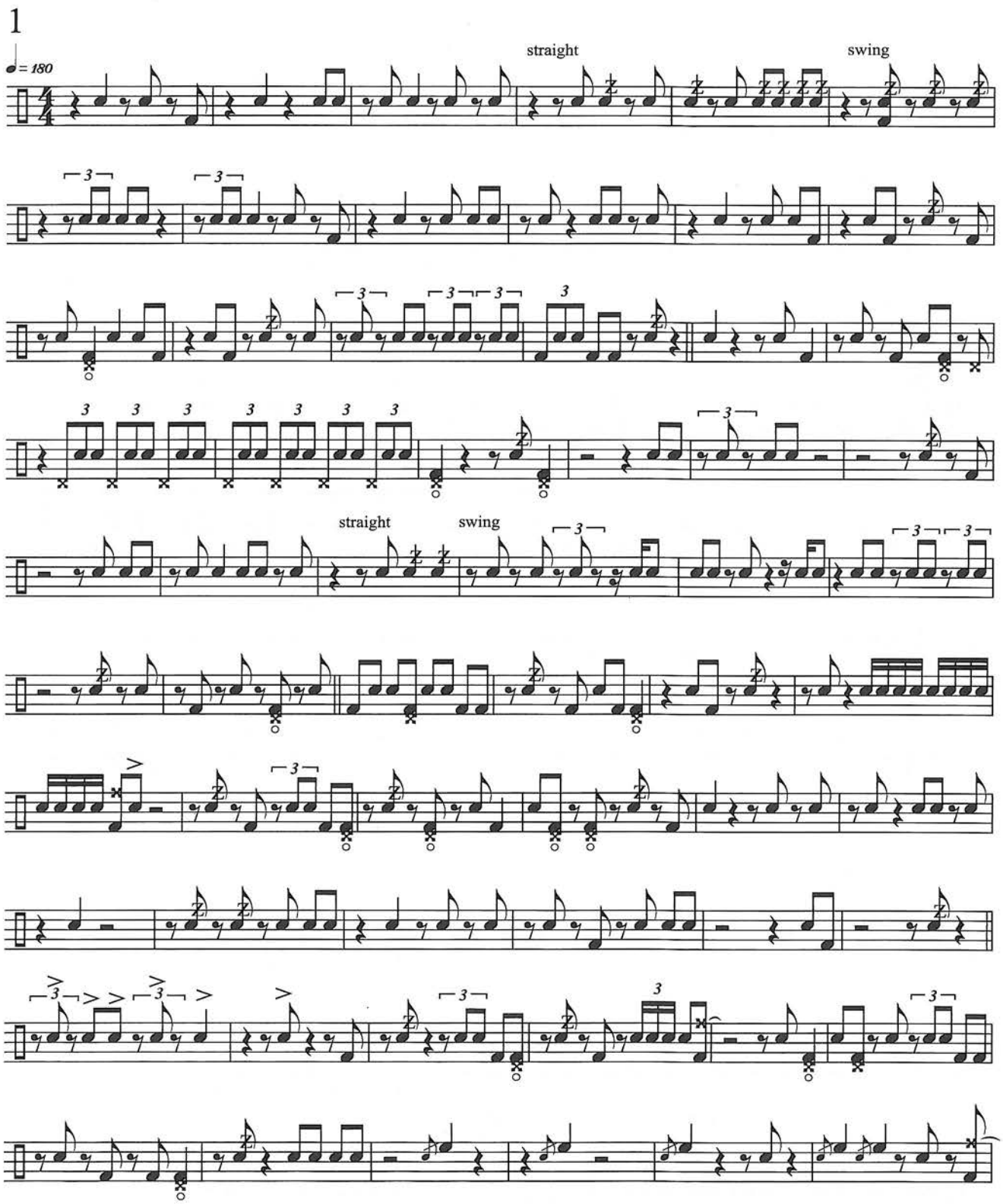
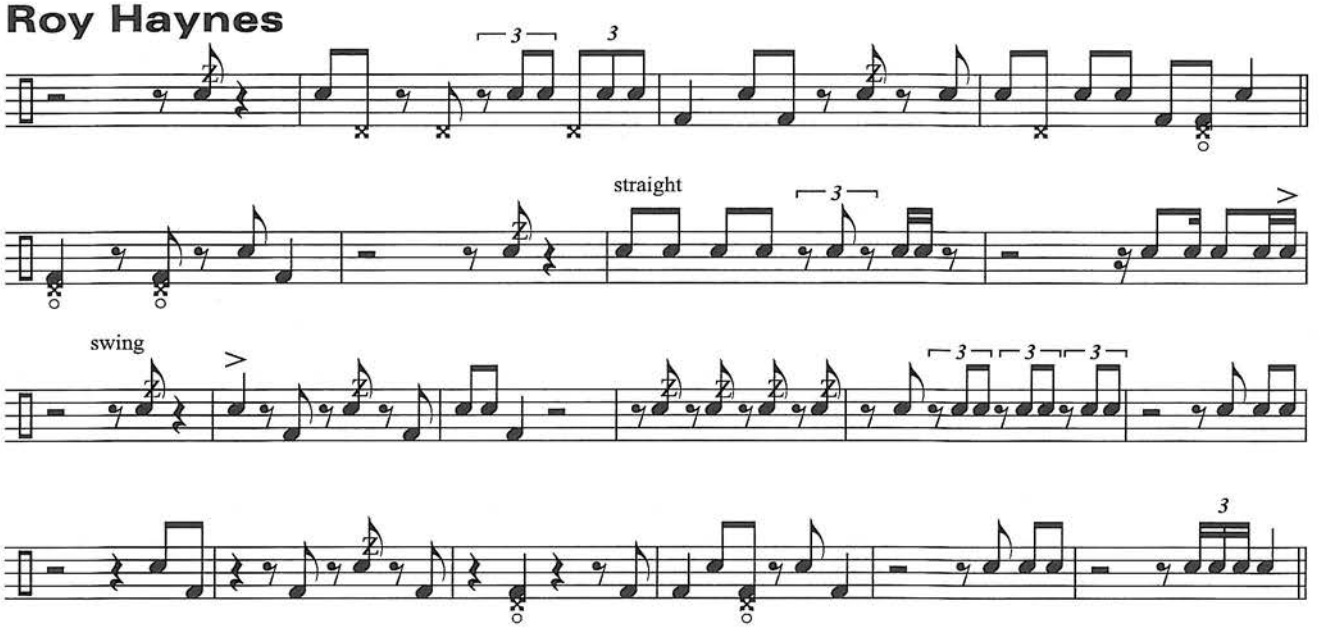
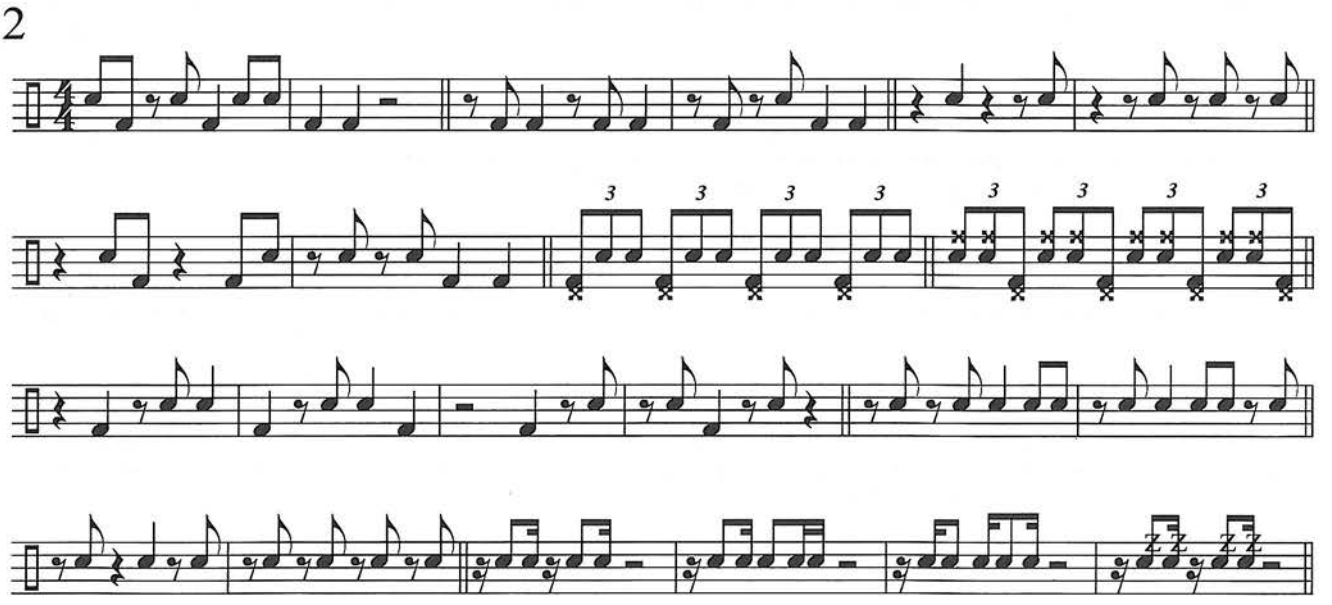
I feel that Roy propels the music from the snare drum rather than from his ride cymbal. His left-hand comping, which actively mixes with his bass drum and hi-hat, "slaps" the music forward. Early on Roy used the standard four-piece jazz kit, but since the 1960s he has varied his setup, sometimes adding a tom-tom or two, timpani, or even a gong.

Roy's touch and cymbal selection has always been distinctive. Early on it was thin ride cymbals with rivets played with a very light attack, creating a very legato groove, which nicely contrasted the snap of his snare drum. In the mid-1960s, Roy became one of the first drummers to embrace the sound of the flat ride cymbal, which has become an important part of his signature sound. You can hear the classic flat ride sound on Chick Corea's *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*. His crash cymbals are bright and fast.

Comping

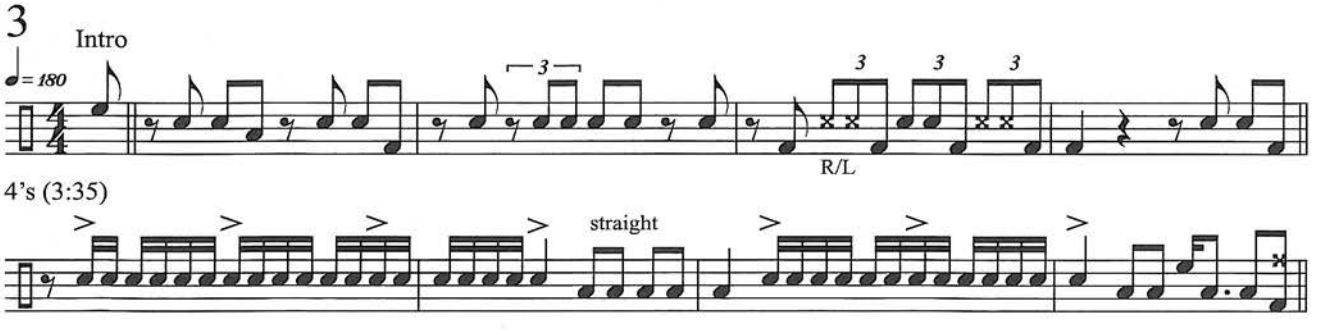
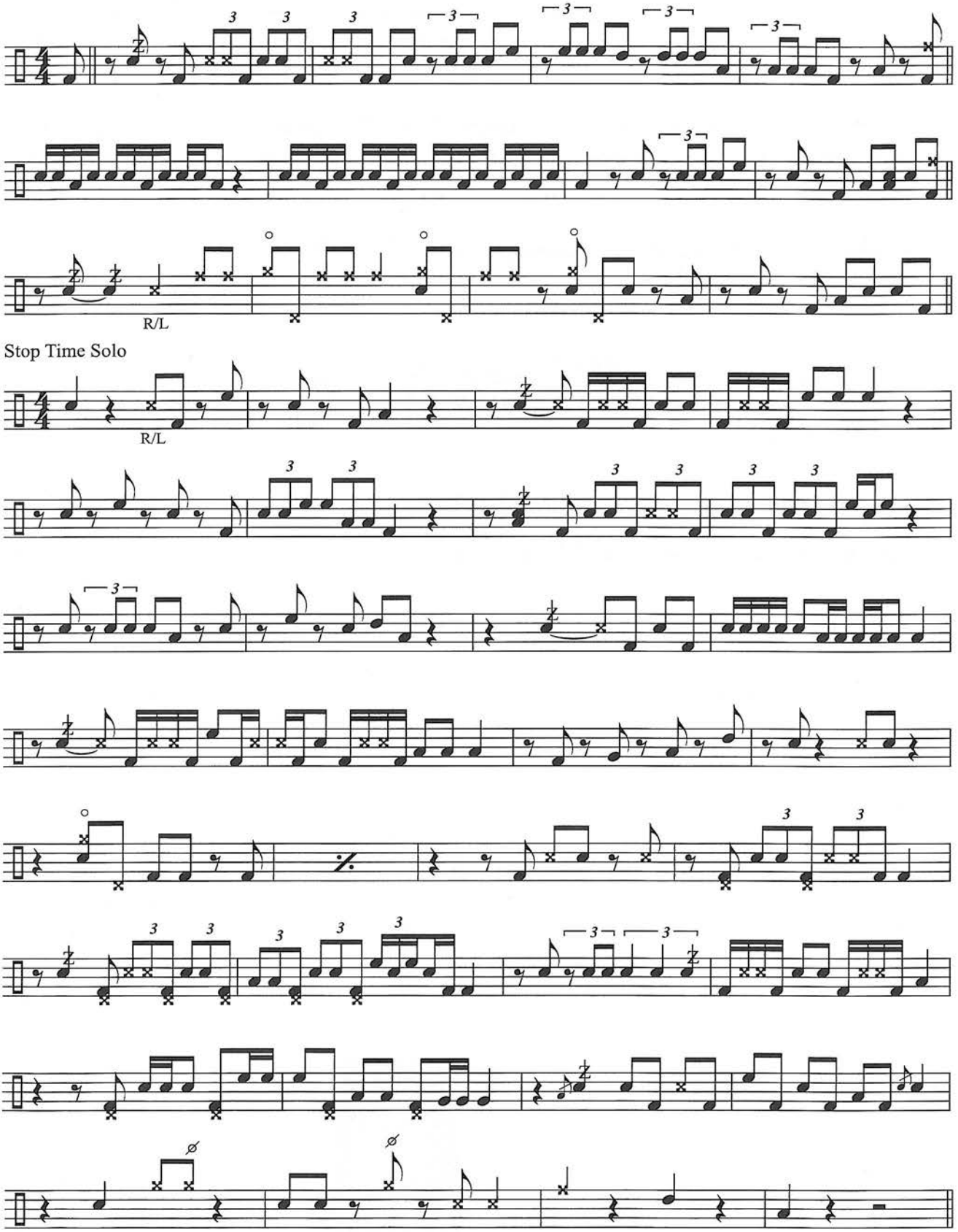
Roy's comping style is quite active and busy, but never heavy or restricting. Roy incorporates his bass drum and hi-hat as melodic voices into his

comping, and he beautifully mixes swinging triplet phrases with straight-8th note ideas and double-time 16th-note ideas. Roy also fully explores the possibilities of varying his touch—buzz strokes, dead strokes, playing the rims, and using mallets and brushes.

The Steve Lacy album *The Straight Horn Of Steve Lacy*, recorded in 1960, provides a great setting for Roy. This piano-less quartet allows Roy free rein and lets us clearly hear his contributions to the music. The following is a transcription from this CD, highlighting Roy's comping behind Lacy's five-chorus solo on the sixteen-measure Thelonious Monk tune "Played Twice." The transcription begins at 2:56. Notice how Roy's playing energizes the music. Check out his rhythmic propulsion and the variety of phrases, touches, and accents employed.

Roy Haynes

Here are a few more of Roy's comping ideas.

Soloing

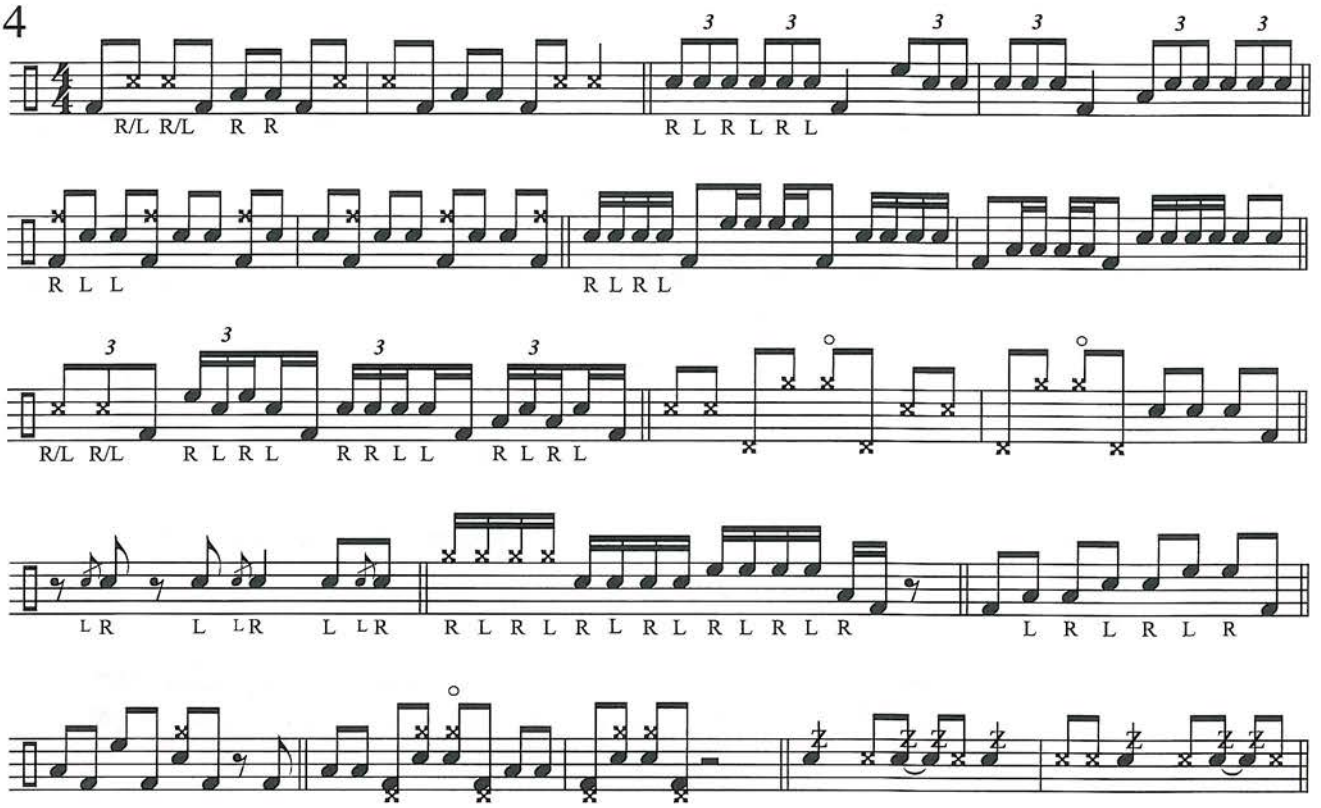
Roy's drum solos are very melodic and an extension of his comping concept. He is acutely aware of the intrigue and excitement generated by linking phrases of contrasting shapes: a staccato, double-time idea will be paired with legato triplet phrases, while legato buzz strokes are paired with staccato stick shots.

Here's a transcription of Roy's soloing, beginning with his hip intro on "If I Should Lose You," from his 1963 album *Out Of The Afternoon*. On this album Roy is playing a kit with two mounted toms and two floor toms. His comping and soloing are superb throughout.



R/L
Stop Time Solo
R/L

Roy Haynes

Here are more of Roy's classic solo ideas.

Ultimate Roy

It's impossible to talk about all of the recordings Roy has been a part of in his sixty-year career, but here's a list of some of my favorites.

The early years:
Bud Powell, *The Amazing Bud Powell, Volume 1*
Lester Young, *Live At The Royal Roost*
Charlie Parker, *Live At The Hi-Hat Club*

The middle years as a leader:
We Three, Just Us, Out Of The Afternoon, Cracklin'

As a sideman:
Thelonious Monk, *In Action* and *Live At The Five Spot*
Steve Lacy, *The Straight Horn Of Steve Lacy*
McCoy Tyner, *Reaching Forth*
John Coltrane, *Dear Old Stockholm* and *Newport 63*
Oliver Nelson, *The Blues And The Abstract Truth*
Chick Corea, *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*
Gary Burton, *Duster*
Jackie McLean, *It's Time*
Andrew Hill, *Black Fire*
Eric Dolphy, *Outward Bound*

Recent times as a leader:
The Roy Haynes Trio, When It's Haynes, It Roars, Fountain Of Youth, Praise, Te Vou!, Birds Of A Feather

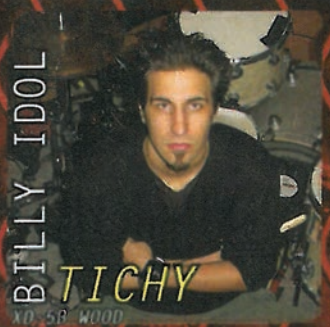
As a sideman:
Chick Corea, *Live In Montreux* and *Trio Music*
Kenny Barron, *Wanton Spirit*
Pat Metheny, *Question And Answer*

Even a partial list of drummers influenced by Roy Haynes is an impressive one: Elvin Jones, Pete LaRoca, Louis Hayes, Ben Riley, Tony Williams, Joe Chambers, Jack DeJohnette, Bob Moses, Jeff Ballard, and Bill Stewart.

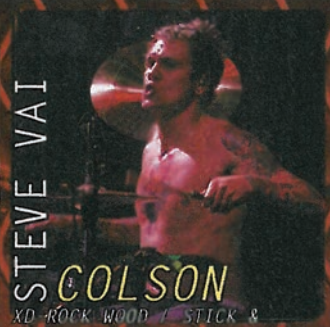
Earlier this year, when I heard Roy play with his quartet at the Village Vanguard during his birthday-week celebration, I had the best seat in the house, right next to his hi-hat. At eighty years old, Roy still plays with more passion, energy, and freedom than just about anyone playing the drums today. I urge you, don't miss an opportunity to see and hear this living master. Hopefully some of Roy's spirit will infect you too.

John Riley's career has included work with such artists as John Scofield, Mike Stern, Woody Herman, and Stan Getz. He has also written the critically acclaimed books The Art Of Bop Drumming *and* Beyond Bop Drumming, *published by Manhattan Music. His latest book,* The Jazz Drummer's Workshop, *has just been released by Modern Drummer Publications.*

MEET VATER'S QUALITY CONTROL TEAM

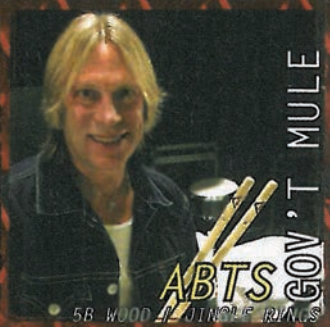


BILLY IDOL
TICHY
XD 5B WOOD



STEVE VAI
COLSON
XD ROCK WOOD / STICK & FINGER TAPE

ENRIQUE IGLESIAS
ROMAINE
5A WOOD



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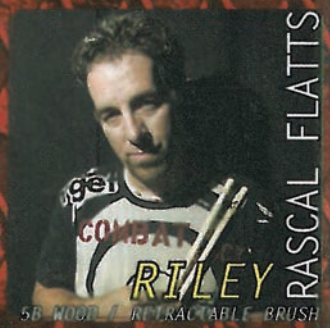
ABTS
5B WOOD / JINGLE RINGS

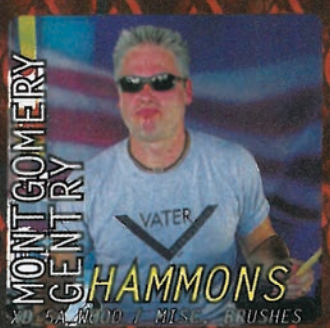
KINGS X
GASKILL
5B NYLON

KANSAS
EHART
SUGAR MAPLE CONCERT WOOD

MICHAEL BUBLE
WYSASKE
NEW ORLEANS JAZZ WOOD

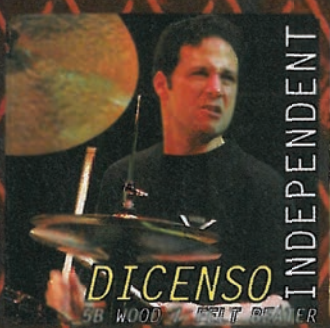


RASCAL FLATTS
RILEY
5B WOOD / RETRACTABLE BRUSH



MONTGOMERY GENTRY
HAMMONS
XD 5A WOOD / MISC. BRUSHES

STING
FREESE
JOE FREESE H-220



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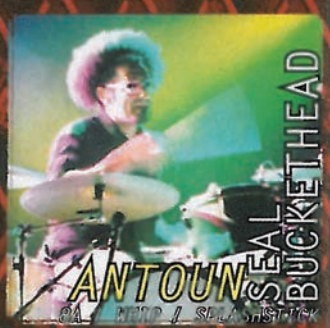
5B WOOD / FELT BEATER



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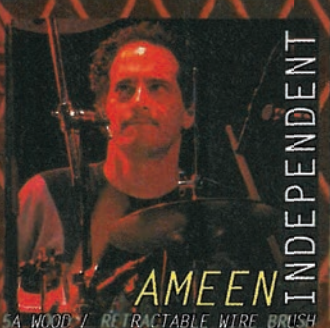
ANTOUN
6A / WIRE / SPLASH STICK

JOHNATHAN BUTLER
VALENTINE
FUSION WOOD & 8A

FAITH HILL
BROOKS & DUNN
GRAY
VAGRANT SAINTS
1A WOOD / MISC. BRUSHES



INDEPENDENT
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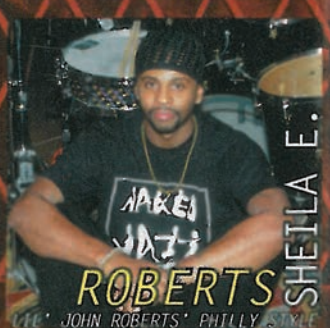
5A WOOD / RETRACTABLE WIRE BRUSH



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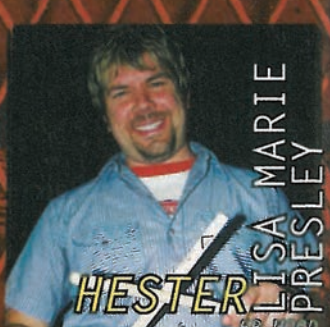
ROBERTS
LIL' JOHN ROBERTS' PHILLY STYLE

SANDRA BERNHARD
SCI
ROCK WOOD / JINGLE RINGS / VINTAGE BOMBER BEATER



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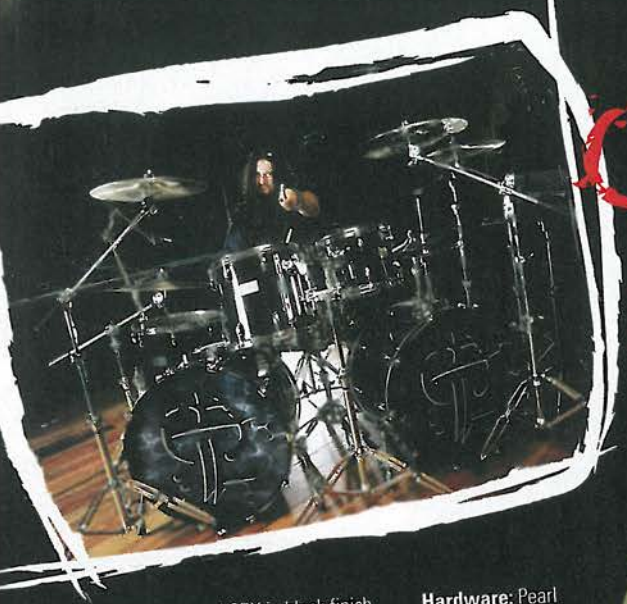
Gene Hoglan

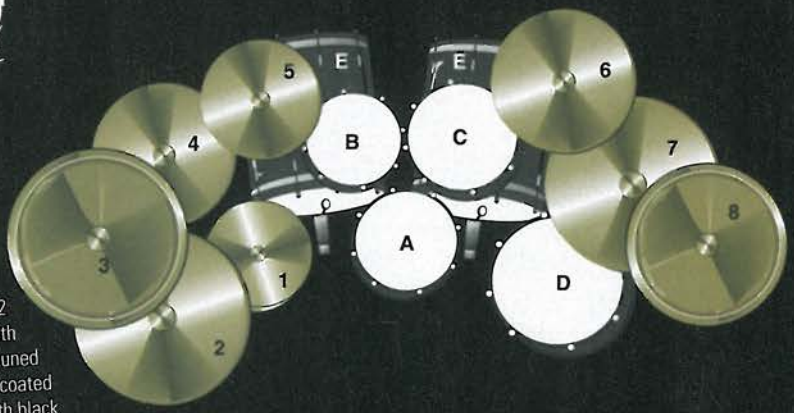
Haulin' With Strapping Young Lad

In the midst of Strapping Young Lad's otherworldly barrage of guitars, screams, bass rumble, and samples, Gene Hoglan's kick drums blast through in furious, amazingly accurate 32nd-note flurries. Hoglan, thirty-seven, was in on the beginnings of the thrash metal movement, joining Dark Angel when he was still in high school in Los Angeles. After several years he left to join the band Death, with whom he recorded two ground-shaking albums, including 1995's *Symbolic*, which raised the bar for outlandish double bass integration.

Story by Robin Tolleson • Photos by Gene Ambo



Gene's Drums



Drums: Pearl SRX in black finish

- **A.** 8x14 brass snare
- **B.** 9x13 rack tom
- **C.** 13x15 rack tom
- **D.** 16x18 floor tom
- **E.** 16x24 kick drum

Cymbals: Sabian

1. 14" AAX Metal hi-hats
2. 22" Paragon ride
3. 20" AAX Chinese
4. 18" AAX Stage crash
5. 15" HHX Studio crash
6. 18" AAX Stage crash
7. 22" Paragon ride
8. 18" AAX Chinese

Hardware: Pearl stands, Camco bass drum pedals (extremely tight spring tension)
Heads: Evans coated G2 on snare drum batter with Glass 500 underneath (tuned tight with no muffling), coated G2s on tops of toms with black Resonants underneath (loose, no muffling), clear EQ2s on bass drum batters with single-ply on fronts (loose, no muffling)
Sticks: Pro-Mark 2B
Electronics: Alesis D5, DM Pro

After meeting Canadian guitarist Devin Townsend, Hoglan was convinced to join Strapping Young Lad. His impressive, over-the-top drumming can be heard on 1997's *City*, 1998's *No Sleep Till Bedtime*, and 2002's *SYL*. After taking time off during the recording of a couple of Devin Townsend solo albums, Strapping Young Lad returned with a vengeance in 2004, releasing the live DVD *For Those Aboot To Rock*.

Hoglan, known as "The Atomic Clock," sat down with *MD* to discuss some of his favorite topics—thrash metal, haulin' double bass drums, and the making of *Alien*, SYL's craziest album yet.

MD: Have you always taken a foot-oriented approach, sharing the lead with your hands and feet?

Gene: I started off being a hand player, because I was really into Neil Peart growing up. He was my first super duper favorite drummer—after Peter Criss, of course. I think Peter was everybody's favorite drummer, at least for guys my age. Neil was more of a hand guy. He played interesting stuff, but it was all understandable. It wasn't like he was playing real nutty stuff that you couldn't figure out.

As I got a little older, I started getting into double bass drummers like Cozy Powell, Rob Reiner from Anvil, Whacko Hunter from Raven, and Filthy Animal [Phil] Taylor of Motörhead—he used to play a lot of fast double bass. I just started doing a lot of foot stuff, and after I started playing thrash metal it got to a point where I was like, Let's do some nutty kick drum patterns. My feet can do it, my brain tells my feet they can do it, so the sky's the limit on both sides.

When I was in the band Death, we did a couple of records. One was called *Individual Thought Patterns*, and the other was *Symbolic*. By the time of *Symbolic*, I was doing a lot of hand stuff as well. So for me it's about trying to balance both hemispheres, hands and feet.

MD: What else did you listen to growing up?

Gene: I grew up on American AM radio—from about '69 to '76—which is when I discovered rock 'n' roll. I listened to all of the '70s stuff that was big at the time, like Queen, Angel, Ted Nugent, Aerosmith, and Cheap Trick. I've always thought that Bun E. Carlos was an underrated drummer. When he got bored playing right-handed lead, he said, I'm going to play left-handed for the next few years. That's cool. I've always been ambidextrous too, and it's really helped out tons in my drumming.

MD: You play open-handed on a right-handed kit.

Gene: I've always done things with either hand. I suppose I'm right-handed, but I do many things left-handed. Playing left-handed on a right-handed kit is just the way I started playing as a kid. Every drummer I talked to tried to convince me to lead with my right hand and cross over with it to play the hi-hat. That didn't make sense to me and I didn't like crossing over, so I said screw it and made up my own rules as I went along.

MD: Where did you grow up?

Gene: I was born in Dallas and raised in Los Angeles. I saw every strip band, all the big hair metal bands of the day. I saw a ton of cool bands, too, like Metallica and Slayer, back when they were playing small clubs in LA. I was really young, and this was before they would card you drastically. When I was thirteen I looked old enough to be there, so nobody ever gave me a hassle.

MD: You started playing with Dark Angel at a young age.

Gene: Dark Angel formed in about 1981, and I joined in '84. I hadn't actually played double bass much before Dark Angel, but any time I'd get on a double bass kit, I just had an aptitude for it. It was easy for me to play double bass, so I went with it.

Dark Angel was a pretty visceral thrash band. After we broke up in 1992, I got a call from Chuck Schuldiner of the band Death

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saying they were looking for a drummer. Sean Reinert, who played on their *Human* album, really opened up tons of avenues for technical playing and killer, speedy double bass. I was like, Wow, he's shown what can be done here, so let's go with that angle, as opposed to just playing some rudimentary drum parts. Let's go nutty.

I was really into Steve Gadd around the time we did *Individual Thought Patterns*. Gadd's bembe beat on the early Al Di Meola stuff was a big influence on me. That was a really cool beat to me, a cool way to break up a 6/8 pattern. So instead of just going "chugga chugga chugga, chugga chugga chugga" on the kick drums, I went nutty with the hands too.

I had started to play with two rides at that time, one on either side of the kit, and I was doing some crazy ghost note-y things on the second ride. That was kind of inspired by Gadd. Then by the time we got to *Symbolic*, I was super duper into Deen Castronovo as well. He's an awesome double bass drummer. Terry Bozzio was huge for me, too, and Mark Craney as well. I grew up playing along with Gino Vanelli's *Brother To Brother* record. Craney was awesome on it.

"The way technology is these days, some people might think, Those double bass parts are fast and precise; how much Pro Tooling did they do here? But I want people to know that it's me going nutty on there, without any help."

MD: I've noticed in your work with Strapping Young Lad that your drum work involves setting up other licks, almost like a big band drummer. I noticed it on "Zen" [from *Alien*] quite a bit.

Gene: Well, I always try to do that. If I'm going to be playing a pattern three times in a song, the first lick will be the simplest one, the second will be a little more advanced, and then the final lick is going to be me throwing it all against the wall. I'm not sure if I do that necessarily with "Zen," but I do try to consider the entire song when I'm coming up with parts. Don't blow your wad the first time you play a lick. If you're going to come back to it later, build on it.

Steve Smith was another influence on me when I was growing up, especially for the interplay between the double bass and the hands. A lot of that stuff I do is based on things I heard Steve Smith or Tommy Aldridge play.

MD: From what I understand, you cut all the drum tracks for *Alien* in a day and a half.

Gene: I'm usually pretty efficient with recording. I like to nail all of my tracks in about five hours. If I've got a ten-song record, give me five hours and we'll get them done.

MD: I mean this as a compliment—are you really playing all that double bass stuff on *Alien*? It almost doesn't sound real.

Gene: Oh yeah, that's me. And what's cool is that we made a "making of" DVD, with a couple of cameras behind my kick drums, just to show everyone that it's me playing those parts. The way technology is these days, some people might think, Those double bass parts are fast and precise; how much Pro Tooling did they do here?

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It's unfortunate, because now you're never sure if it's the drummer playing the parts or if somebody "fixed" them. But I want to make myself sound as machine-like and precise as possible. And I want people to know that it's me going nutty on there, without any help—and it's on video to prove it.

For *Alien*, I recorded eight songs on the first day, and the second day we did a ninth song and then wrote a new tune in the studio. We took a riff that our guitarist Jed [Simon] had, worked on it for a few minutes, and that became the song "We Ride." It's just crazy 16th notes hauling on the double bass drums. We did some computer editing on that one. We recorded the majority of it and then Devin got in and started chopping, putting a bridge here or a verse there. That was one tune where we definitely utilized computer technology, but that's still me playing it, dammit.

MD: So when you guys record, at first you're just concerned with getting the drum track.

Gene: Correct. On this record it was Dev and me working on the majority of the tunes. Byron [Stroud, bass] and Jed were away last year, so the onus was on Dev and me to write the record. We just kept pushing each other. Jamming on songs from the ground up was a refreshing change for us. Dev and I have played together for eight years, but this was the first time that we built tunes together—no preconceived ideas beforehand or entire songs completed with drum programming.

That said, I love working with guitarists who program drum machines, because a lot of times they don't understand that drummers don't have four legs and three arms. When I hear patterns that a drummer would *need* four legs to play, I'm like, "Okay, I'm going to learn how to play that." That's why some of the stuff that comes out of me sounds so octopus-like, because I'm trying to match what somebody has programmed.

Dev's a killer drum programmer, but he programmed one song, and, after we were done recording it, he was like, "Man, I programmed this tune because I didn't think you could play it." I was like, "Come on, if you program it, I'm going to play it." So it's fun to raise the bar for yourself with every record. I try to step it up with each one.

MD: I like the concept of Strapping Young Lad. There's a lot of great guitar work, but I don't recall one guitar solo on *Alien*.

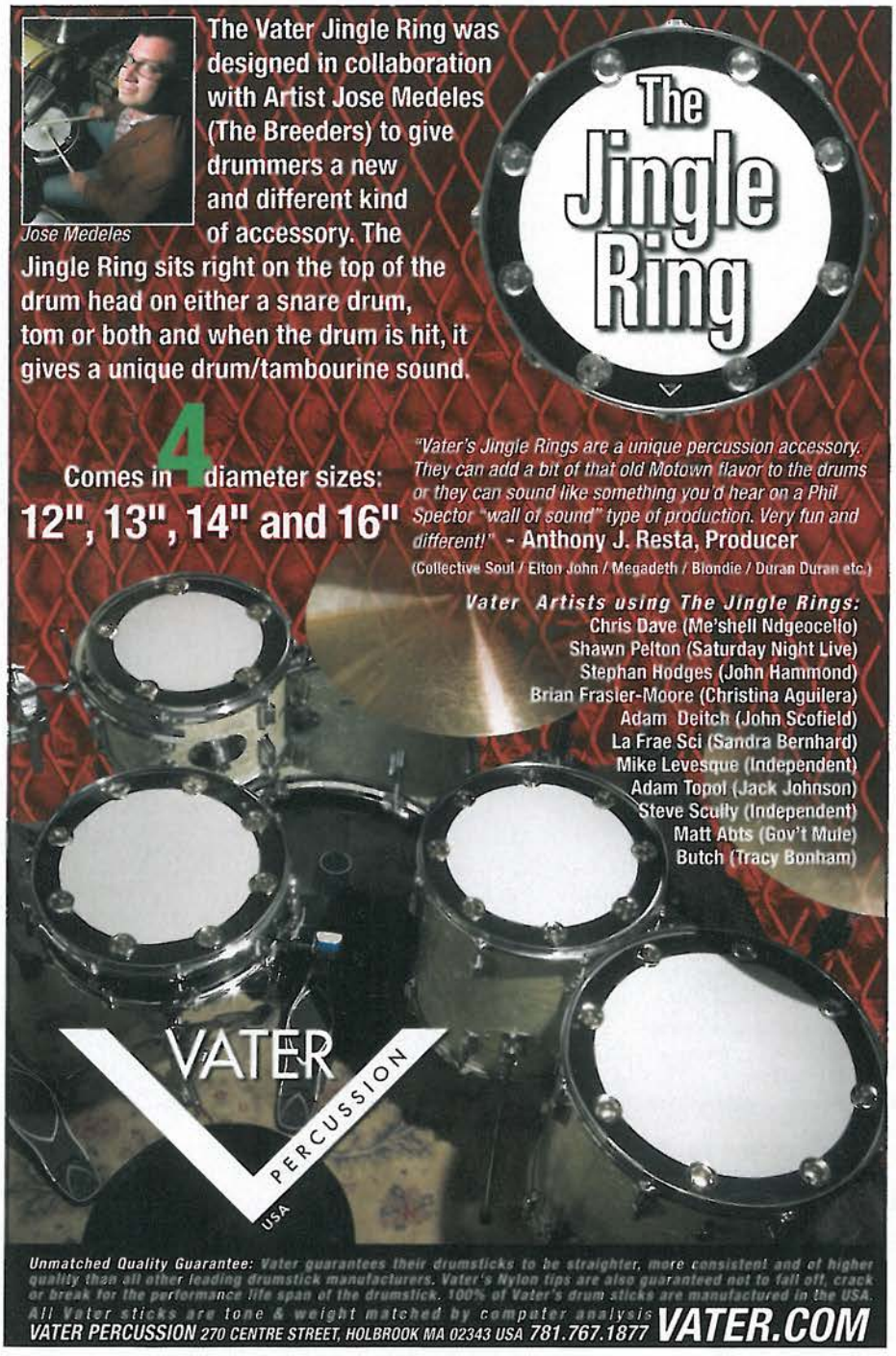
Gene: Strapping is a more rhythmically based band. Having a paucity of leads is cool, but having them thrown in occasionally is totally wicked as well. Actually, I think the music is pretty well-rounded. I like the material. It's fun to play.

Ordinarily I dread the really super hauling double bass songs. We have a song called "Shitstorm" on the new record that has a crazy 32nd-note passage that doesn't seem to stop. That was my challenge for the record—to really nail that one. You've got to step up and slam that one, attacking the song as opposed to dreading it.

MD: Do you do anything to physically prepare yourself for a session or a gig?

Gene: I've always been a proponent of using leg weights. When the band is performing, I'll keep them on for the first few songs of the set. It's like isometric exercise, like a batter's doughnut. He's in the on-deck circle swinging the bat with a couple of weights on the bat, and then he pops them off and the bat's lighter—it's the same concept with your legs.

I kind of have an economy of motion when I play. I've been able to concentrate and spread my energy out so that it comes out of the furthest extremities. I use my



wrists instead of my elbows and my ankles instead of my knees and legs. So even when I'm hauling on the double kicks, my knees don't move that much. It looks like my legs are barely moving. So I'm spreading out the energy to the furthest part and then exploding off of that. I suppose that leg weights have helped me with that. I've got pretty strong ankles and wrists.

MD: Do you use three-pound weights?

Gene: Yes, and then I also play in these big heavy boots, two-and-a-half pounds apiece. I've got an extra five and a half pounds of weight on my feet, but it works. Playing in boots is comfortable for me. You can really stomp the pedals and not worry about getting blisters on your feet.

MD: Do you play heel-up or down?

Gene: For the most part, heel-up. In some songs that are fully flying for an extended amount of 32nd notes, I'll plan a few rests into the part, where I can put the heels down for a bar before lifting them back up.

I also utilize the Dom Famularo warm-up technique. I explain it on our DVD and on our Web site, in case anybody wants to see what it looks like. But it involves resting the balls of your feet on the ground and bouncing left and right. It looks like you're going kind of nutty, getting this spastic motion going with your legs, but it really works. It kind of cracks all the adhesions in your ankles and gets 'em moving.

I do some stretching and I warm up on a practice pad with some heavy-duty drum corps sticks. That's the same isometric idea—I warm up with big heavy sticks and then switch down to my Pro-Mark 2Bs. Then I'm ready to rock.

MD: What type of kick pedals do you use?

Gene: I use old Camco chain drives that I bought about eighteen years ago, and they were five years old *then*. They're awesome. They don't do anything for you like a lot of the new pedals do. They're just an extension of your feet—they let your feet do what they want to do. They're good, solid pedals that have lasted a long time. They still have the same beaters on them, all nicked and chewed up—that's how I remember which pedal goes on the left drum and which goes on the right.

MD: You play big kick drums.

Gene: I like 24" kicks because they're bigger and they look cooler. There's a slight speed difference—they're a little slower than a 22" and not as punchy.

I like larger toms too. On the new tour I'm playing a six-piece Pearl SRX kit, with 13", 15", and 18" toms. I especially prefer the larger dimensions for Strapping, because the music is pretty bombastic, drum-oriented stuff.

MD: And you feel there's a difference between a 22" and a 24"?

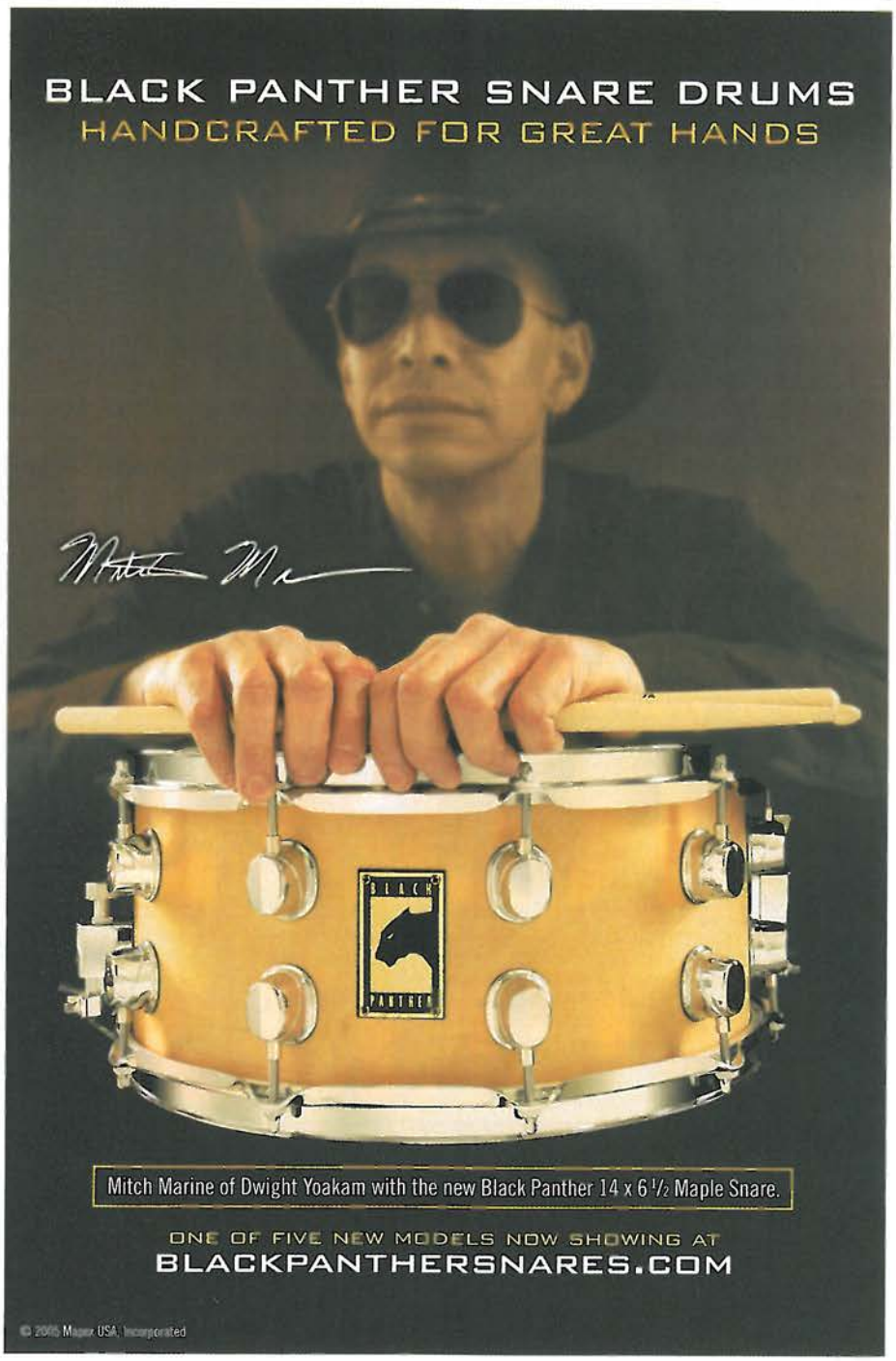
Gene: I've played 24"s for so long that it's the size I'm used to. The thing that *has* kind of changed the feel of my bass drums is using triggers, which I started doing the past few years with Strapping. That can change the feel. I was always afraid of the triggers misfiring, but modern technology has improved a lot with that. The sensitivity control is very good now, too. That's where I've tried to maintain a bit of the acoustic feel, by backing off the sensitivity quite a bit on the triggers. You've really got to lay into my system to make them fire.

MD: What cymbals are you using?

Gene: I use an amalgamation of Sabians. I love the HHX and AAX lines. Those have an awesome tone, and they make great Chinas. They're killer cymbals.

MD: When Strapping Young Lad records, do you play along with a sync track?

Gene: I record everything to a click. We



pretty much map out the click track. For instance, in every Strapping tune there are pushes and pulls in the time, so we deliberately speed up or slow down the click. On the first song, "Imperial," there are two or three tempo changes, slight variances where we pull it back a little bit and then push it forward again. In the song "Skeksis," there's about five or six slight tempo changes. We just want to have the best feel for every part of a song.

I use lots of ghost notes when I play. Just about every part I play that isn't a polka or a slamming double bass beat involves ghost notes. And since they are ghost notes, they're the first things that tend to disappear when we start layering guitar tracks, vocals, and samples. The ghost notes tend to just fly away. It's for feel anyway. But I love the tastier portions of the drums.

If I were to just play in a grinding band, I wouldn't enjoy it as much. But Strapping is an *everything* band for me. You have beautiful songs like "Possessions," and full-on cruising tunes like "Shitstorm." And ghost notes have always been a part of what I do. Lots of people come up to me and say, "Wow, I watched your snare hand tonight and you're doing tons of stuff that I never hear on the records."

MD: Earlier you were saying that even though you play with a click track, you're still free to play with the time a little bit.

Gene: Totally. You don't have to be constrained to leave a tempo at a certain place. You just map out the click track on the computer before you start and everything's cool. Devin and I worked a lot on tempos on the record, just to make sure that nothing was too fast or slow.

MD: The 6/8 part on "Imperial," where you go to the 16th-note triplet pattern on the kicks, fits the arrangement so well.

Gene: Drums, especially with Strapping, are not necessarily a lead instrument. I've only played one album, *Symbolic* by Death, where I felt like the drums should propel things really crazily. With Strapping, it just works well to have the drums be a good solid base for what's happening. If we're switching things up and taking things from a blast beat down to a triplet, just make sure it's solid and happening.

MD: You're doing some cool flam double bass stuff on "Skeksis."

Gene: Yeah, that's a nice rhythm. I love the dancehall beat, the Jamaican reggae stuff. I utilize a lot of dancehall with my other band, The Almighty Punchdrunk. So I brought that over to "Skeksis." It's a sexy rhythm, and even though we're about the furthest thing from sexy dudes and our music is not that sexy, at least some of the rhythmic patterns are.

MD: In the song "Love," it's interesting that you lock in with the guitar part rather than the bass.

Gene: That's exactly what I'm doing, just focusing on those 32nd-note triplets. The bass is laying down something really solid, single notes moving with the riff that add some super low end. Byron's playing with me, and I'm playing with Dev and Jed. We're locking up everything there in a chunky sort of way.

MD: On the song "Shine," you punctuate a lot with your feet, and I love hearing your hi-hat going in 4/4 against the 6/8.

Gene: I'm doing this tom-tom/hi-hat pattern along with a galloping pattern with my feet. That takes some good four-way independence.

MD: "Possessions" features a very syncopated verse groove, and a change in the chorus to a shuffle feel.

Gene: I haven't been influenced by Vinnie Paul that much, but I'm pretty sure I got that idea from the Pantera song "Psycho Holiday." He does a real cool shuffle-y double bass thing on it, and it worked here. Since the pattern is sort of mid-tempo, you can throw a lot of tom stuff in there too.

MD: Where do you feel your place is in the history of thrash?

Gene: Well, I definitely didn't start it, but I know that Dark Angel was one of the very first thrash bands, which I was in back when I was still in school. I joined in 1984, and there wasn't a thrash metal scene at the time. We were progenitors of it. I suppose I was there at the beginnings of it all.

Grind evolved from the thrash metal movement, as did everything that's big now. For me, it's a very real style of music. It's not about image or anything other than playing aggressive songs from the heart and from the gut. The basic tenets of thrash are be yourself, be aggressive. If that's what you are, then show it.

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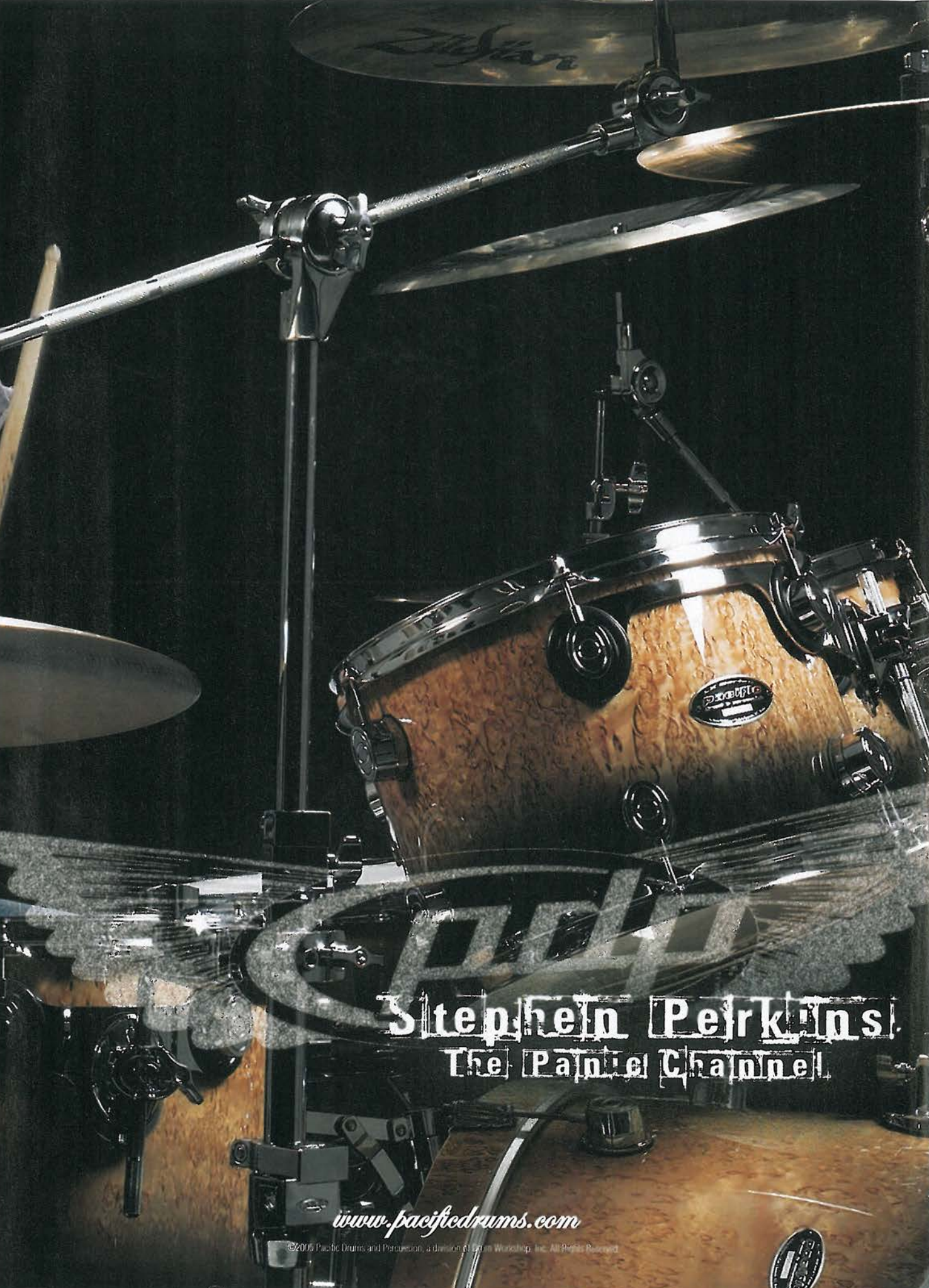

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GIGS
BROOKS & DUNN
FAITH HILL
JEWEL
MEINL

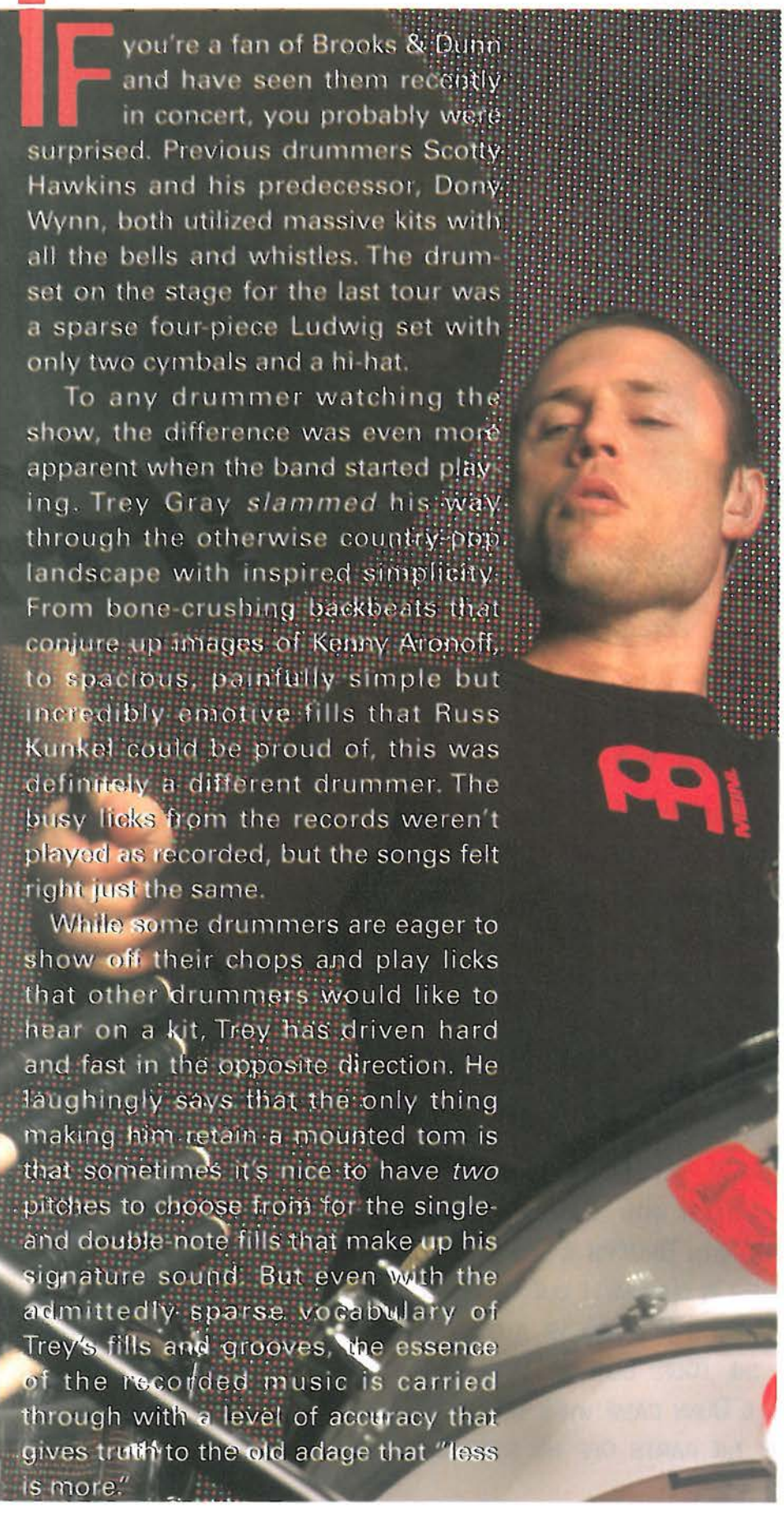
TREY GRAY

JOURNEYMAN DRUMMER

STORY BY JOHN M. ALDRIDGE
PHOTOS BY RICK MALKIN

COUNTRY MUSIC DRUMMERS ARE, WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS, TYPICALLY VIEWED AS SIDEMEN. WHEN A TOURING COUNTRY ACT CHANGES DRUMMERS, THE NEW DRUMMER IS USUALLY EXPECTED TO COPY THE LICKS FROM THE ALBUM AND MAKE THE CHANGE SEAMLESS. THEREFORE, WHEN A NEW DRUMMER COMES INTO AN ESTABLISHED GIG WITH ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT COUNTRY POP ACTS CURRENTLY TOURING, AND HE'S GIVEN CARTE BLANCHE TO "PLAY WHAT HE FEELS," THERE'S SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT HAPPENING.

TREY GRAY IS THE DRUMMER WHO GOT THIS OPPORTUNITY WHEN, DURING A BREAK FROM A TOUR WITH JEWEL, HE WAS ASKED TO STEP IN AND FINISH A TOUR WITH BROOKS & DUNN. TREY WAS ALREADY A WELL-KNOWN DRUMMER IN NASHVILLE DUE TO HIS SEVEN PLUS YEARS OF TOURING WITH FAITH HILL, SO HE ALREADY KNEW MOST OF THE MUSICIANS ON THE TOUR. BUT THE BEST PART OF GETTING THE GIG WITH BROOKS & DUNN CAME WHEN THEY TOLD HIM THAT HE DIDN'T NEED TO COPY THE PARTS OFF THE RECORD, JUST "PLAY WHAT YOU FEEL."



If you're a fan of Brooks & Dunn and have seen them recently in concert, you probably were surprised. Previous drummers Scotty Hawkins and his predecessor, Dony Wynn, both utilized massive kits with all the bells and whistles. The drum-set on the stage for the last tour was a sparse four-piece Ludwig set with only two cymbals and a hi-hat.

To any drummer watching the show, the difference was even more apparent when the band started playing. Trey Gray *slammed* his way through the otherwise country-pop landscape with inspired simplicity. From bone-crushing backbeats that conjure up images of Kenny Aronoff, to spacious, painfully simple but incredibly emotive fills that Russ Kunkel could be proud of, this was definitely a different drummer. The busy licks from the records weren't played as recorded, but the songs felt right just the same.

While some drummers are eager to show off their chops and play licks that other drummers would like to hear on a kit, Trey has driven hard and fast in the opposite direction. He laughingly says that the only thing making him retain a mounted tom is that sometimes it's nice to have *two* pitches to choose from for the single- and double-note fills that make up his signature sound. But even with the admittedly sparse vocabulary of Trey's fills and grooves, the essence of the recorded music is carried through with a level of accuracy that gives truth to the old adage that "less is more."

Trey Gray has lived a busy life over the past fifteen years. From the time he made the trip from his hometown in Indiana to make his mark in Nashville, this hard-rocking drummer has not had a spare moment to breathe. From a seven-year stint with country pop diva Faith Hill, to playing a year-and-a-half world tour with the virtually unclassifiable Jewel, and then back across to the country-pop side of the fence for his current gig with Brooks & Dunn, Trey has slammed his meat & potatoes backbeat in front of literally millions of fans.

With a burgeoning list of credits in Nashville and LA studios, Trey has also established himself as one who can deliver when the red light goes on. Lately, he's been producing albums for up-and-coming bands, mostly in the alternative rock genre. But you'll also find him working on demos or arrangements for new songwriters as well. In other words, if there's music to be played, recorded, arranged, or just enjoyed, you'll find Trey in the thick of it.

But where will you find him on his increasingly rare days off? Most likely hanging around behind the counter at Fork's Drum Closet in Nashville. Despite the fame that comes with the high-profile touring work that has been Trey's bread and butter for the past fifteen years, he still enjoys hanging out with the drummers he "grew up with." The drummers who trade with Fork's and the ones who work in the store are Trey's second family.

Trey Gray is a textbook case of a drummer who moved from a small town to the big city to make it in the music business, and after the required (if somewhat abbreviated) period of struggle and starvation, made it big. His story is an inspiration for young drummers wondering what it's like to make it in Music City USA and beyond.

MD: How did you get started in Nashville?

Trey: I moved there in 1990. I'd been playing clubs in Indiana, saving my money to go to New York City and try my luck there, when a buddy came to visit. He'd just signed a publishing deal in Nashville and said, "You need to go there because there's a new wave of country-pop in Nashville."

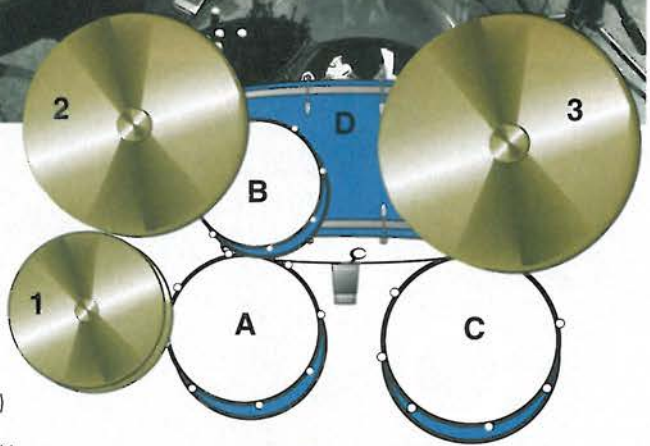
MD: What was your first job in Nashville?

Trey: I got a job working for a cartage company for about six weeks, and then I got a job in the Pearl warehouse as the shipping department manager. I was also working as much as I could with anyone I could find to play with. I worked at Pearl for about a year and a half. Then I quit that to start playing more. But to fill in the gaps, I'd work at Fork's Drum Closet as a fill-in guy whenever someone needed a day off.

MD: What was the first break that started you on the path to your current gig?

Trey: In late 1992, I got a gig with a new artist named Robert Ellis Oral. That was my first big tour-bus gig. He had a single called "Boom It Was Over Just Like That," which turned out to be oddly prophetic. About nine months into that tour, another single came out and it was doing well too, but one day when I got on the bus I could tell something was wrong. Before I could ask anyone, Robert came in and said, "This is the last weekend. I got dropped from the label." It was a pretty crushing day.

MD: What happened next?



Trey's Brooks & Dunn Tour Kit

Drums: Ludwig Vistalite
- A. 6½x14 Hammered Bronze snare
- B. 9x12 rack tom
- C. 14x16 floor tom
- D. 16x22 bass drum

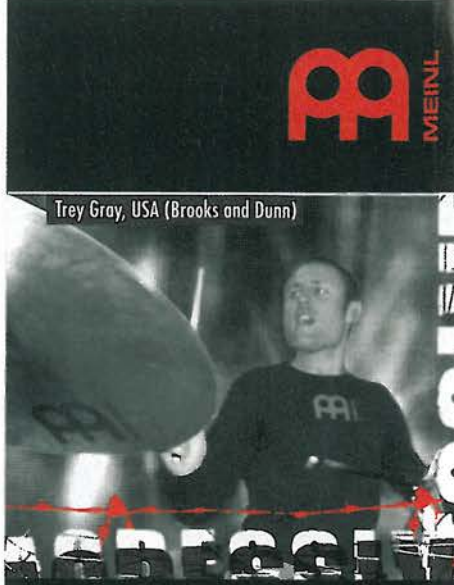
Cymbals: Meinl
1. 14" Byzance Heavy hi-hats (or a pair of 16" Byzance Medium crashes used for hats)
2. 19" Amun Powerful crash
3. 22" Byzance Medium-Heavy ride

Hardware: Ludwig stands and pedals, Gibraltar bass drum pedals

Heads: Aquarian New Orleans special on snare drum, Tommy Lee on tops of toms with Studio-X on bottoms, clear Super-Kick II on bass drum batter with Regulator (with small port) on front

Sticks: Ahead 5B in left hand and Vater 1A in right, (Trey has about ¼" trimmed off the butt end of both as he likes using shorter sticks)

Accessories: Superlux mic's, QuikStix stick holders, Vintage Logo heads



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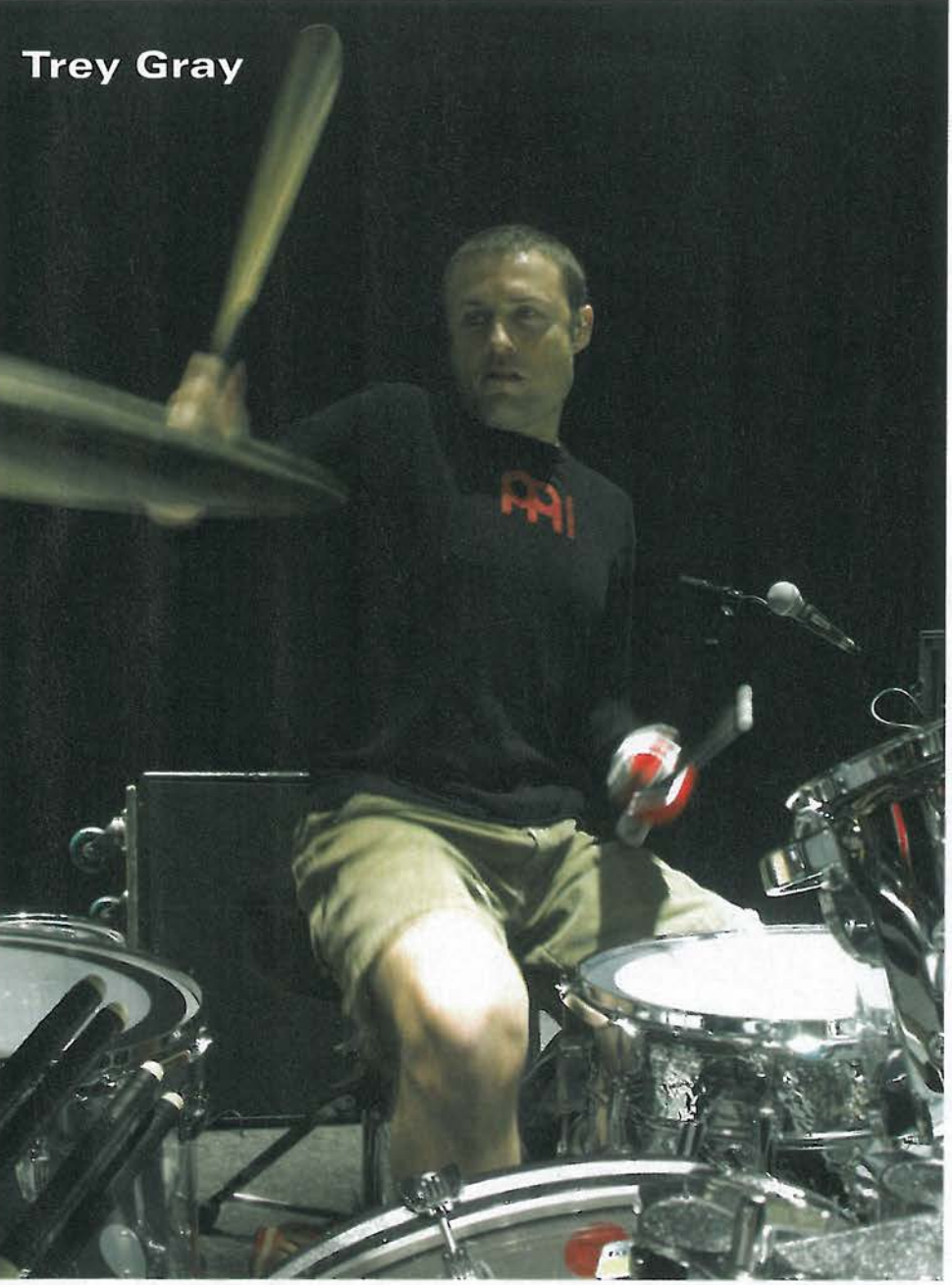

Trey: Well, the holidays were coming and I was pretty bummed because I didn't have a gig. Then I got a call from a friend, the fiddle player in the Oral band who was working for a band called Evangeline. They needed a drummer immediately. I went down at 6:00 and played a one-song audition. They asked me if I could leave at midnight! We did two months straight right up to Christmas Eve, which got me through the holidays and gave me a little more confidence in my ability to find work when that tour ended.

MD: The job ended that quickly?

Trey: When I got home I got a call from another friend who had a gig with David Ball, doing radio shows to promote his new record. David was on Warner Bros. and so was another new artist named Faith Hill. He told me that they were putting a band together for Faith and that I should try to get in for an audition. I called the bandleader and discovered that the auditions had already been set up and that they had as many as they were going to take, so I couldn't get in. Two weeks later they did another two days of auditions, and I got in that time.

MD: How did the audition go?

Trey: It was horrible. I didn't even play a full song before Faith and her bandleader walked out of the room. I left to tape a TV show with David Ball, and later on was having dinner with my girlfriend when I got the call telling me that the gig with Faith was between me and another drummer. They were asking if I could come back the next morning.

The next morning, the other drummer went in and played for about forty-five

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minutes, so I was pretty much convinced that I'd already been beaten out for the job. Finally it was my turn. They started off the same song I played the night before, but this time they didn't even get as far as I had the first time and cut me off *again* and walked out of the room. I figured I'd blown it and was about to pack up and leave when the guitar player told me I should stick around. They walked back in a few minutes later and told me I had the gig.

MD: Wow, all that angst and you had the job in less than a song!

Trey: I have to say that auditions are a very hit-or-miss proposition. There are guys who audition great but can't do the gig, and there are other guys who don't audition well but are great drummers. It's just not fair! And when there's such a gulf between the artist and the sidemen, you really never know where you stand until they decide to tell you.

MD: Did you ever have any more auditions like that later on?

Trey: Not really. After that, every gig that I've gotten has been through people seeing me play with Faith, or someone that I knew having recommended me for the gig.

MD: Was Faith already popular, or were you having to do the club circuit with her?

Trey: That gig just took off. She had one radio hit already, but they just kept coming and we kept touring. She grew in popularity so quickly that we were doing large venues from the beginning.

MD: I've talked to a lot of drummers about playing as a sideman with a Nashville act. Most of them have had to copy the parts on the records and almost none of them ever get to play on the records themselves. How did you approach learning Faith's music?

Trey: I was very concerned about copping Lonnie Wilson's or Eddie Bayers' parts from the records, because I thought that was what it had to be. Over the next seven years, every time a new album came out, I'd woodshed the parts until I had them down.

MD: How do you translate parts that had a lot of tom fills into parts that will work with your kit?

Trey: I just play what feels right for the song unless it's a signature part. In that case I'll play it as close to the record as possible, using fewer drums [big smile].

MD: You sound like that changed over time.

Trey: It was pretty much the same thing until 2000, when I did the last Faith tour, *Soul To Soul*, with Tim McGraw. We all knew that this was the last tour because Faith was getting off the road to have a baby. A close friend in the band came to me and said, "You know, we're never going to get the chance to play with people like this again. Let's play it the way *we* want to play it instead of being carbon copies of the records." So I just let my own taste take over and played it in a way that I felt good about it.

I'm a very groove-oriented drummer, so the parts actually got simpler. It worked and everyone seemed to like it—or at least they didn't tell us to stop! From that point on I started feeling like I had really accomplished something and that I was being true to myself rather than copping the parts on the record note for note. That's also when a lot of good things started happening for me.

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Jason Mraz

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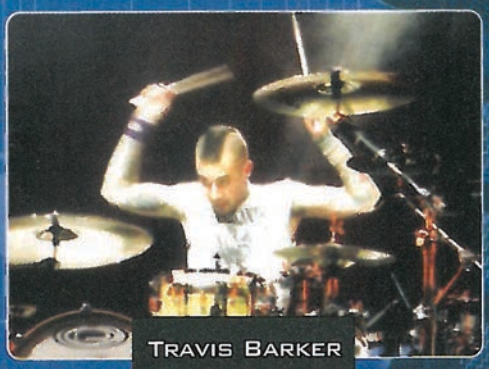


Travis Barker

Airto Moreira

Stephen Perkins
Banyan

Rikki Rockett
Poison

Luis Conte

Terrence Higgins
The Dirty Dozen

Walfredo Reyes, Jr
Steve Winwood

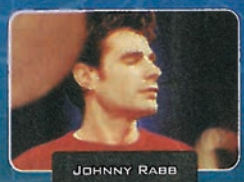
Stanton Moore
Galactic

Mercedes Lander
Kittie

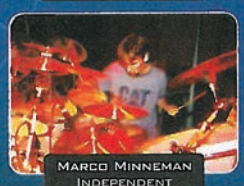
Zoro
Lenny Kravitz

Lester Estelle
Pillar

Richie "Gajate" Garcia



Johnny Rabb



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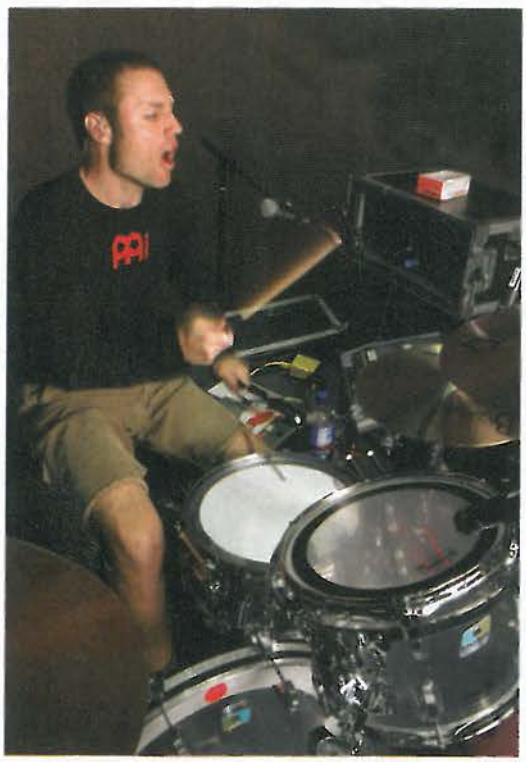
MD: What kind of things?

Trey: After that tour, Faith's band shut down and she had another baby. All the guys in the band got other gigs. Four of the guys in the band and I went out with Jessica Andrews and Billy Gillman. Gillman was a little boy and he had a legion of young girl fans! It was mayhem. He was thirteen at the time and a really nice, polite kid. We tried to twist him like you would your little brother but he was a very sharp, good kid.

MD: That sounds like a pretty radical departure from Faith Hill.

Trey: Oh, that was nothing compared to what came next. In the middle of that tour, I got a call from Mark Oakley, a friend of



mine that I'd been in a rock band with earlier. He had gotten the gig as Jewel's bandleader. There were a lot of loops on her record, and the drummer she had at the time just wasn't cutting it. Mark told me that Jewel was going to call me.

MD: Sounds like a good omen. Did you have to audition for the band or prove that you could play with loops?

Trey: No. Mark knew that I could do that from working with me before. But they were scheduled to do *The Tonight Show* and were just not happy with how the drummer was playing. So I said, "Let me play *The Tonight Show* with you, and if you like it, great." I had already played *The Tonight Show* with Faith Hill several times and a couple of other acts as well, so it wasn't that big a deal.

MD: You told them that you'd audition at *The Tonight Show*, a gig that most drummers would consider a major landmark in their career?

Trey: Well, we did rehearse a day before the show. It's not like I strolled in and played *The Tonight Show* without ever having played with the band before.

MD: Was it awkward stepping into a gig like that, where the other drummer was being replaced?

Trey: I'm not a fan of sneaking in under another drummer to take his gig, and I didn't want him to lose the gig. But the bottom line was that they weren't going to keep him on the job because they weren't comfortable with what he was doing.

MD: Coming off a tour with a preteen singer, this had to have been a pretty weird transition. Did the rock side of the world work a lot differently at that level?

Trey: It was night and day. When I got the call about the rehearsal for the *Tonight Show* gig, this English guy called me up who I could barely understand. He worked for Jewel. He told me that they had a ticket for me to San Diego booked for the next morning and asked if I could please be at the airport on time. I got a DAT of all the loops and a CD of the songs on the album and had a long flight on the plane to learn them.

MD: I can picture you air drumming on the plane with your headphones on.

Trey: When I finally got there and went to the rehearsal hall, the band was excellent. They had shipped the other drummer's kit down and there were electronics pads everywhere and so many cymbals that I couldn't see the band. I stripped it down to a four-piece and a couple of cymbals and we rehearsed without Jewel. We played a few songs and everyone seemed to be happy. Then the road manager called me aside and said they needed to get my picture and passport info.

MD: So they just hired you without Jewel ever hearing you play?

Trey: No, I think they were just going to be ready since they were pretty sure she'd like the way I played the songs. Jewel came in at 3:00 and we played a few songs. She turned

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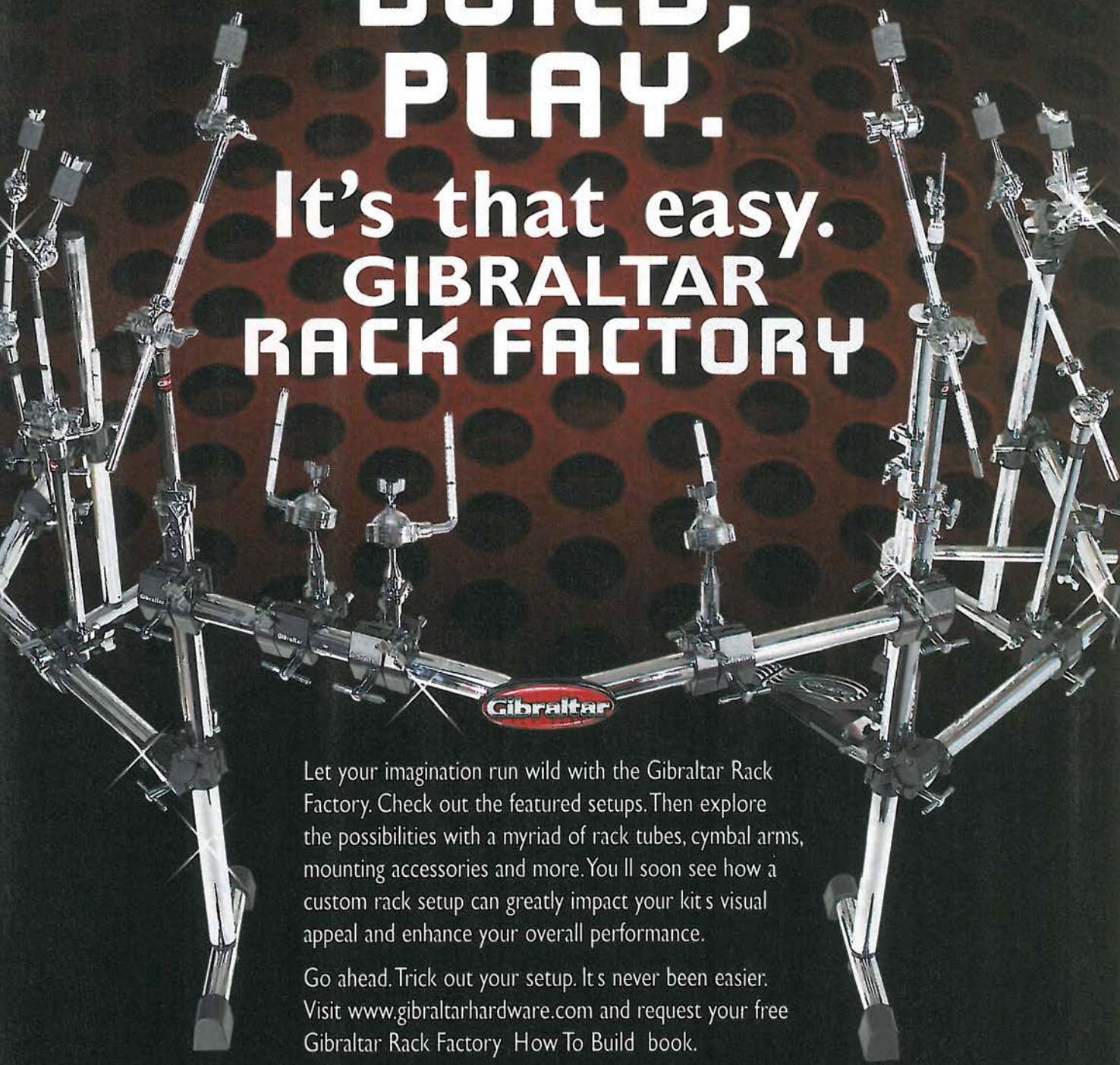

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around and said, "How's your schedule?" Joking around I said, "I think I can clear a spot for you." She said, "Okay, let's go eat." She grabbed my arm and we all went to dinner. I was in the band.

MD: How do you approach a new gig like that?

Trey: With an open mind. First I listen to what the artist wants and let them know if I think I'll fit or not. "Are you sure you want a meat and potatoes drummer?" I want to get the feel and tempo down, but I don't try to memorize the song parts. I want to leave room for the part to grow as I hear it.

MD: What was the biggest difference between the Faith gig and Jewel?

Trey: It was really different. Faith was always good to the band, but we were sidemen and didn't really get the star treatment that she got. We flew on commercial airlines or rode the busses from one gig to the next. But there was definitely a line between Faith and us.

When I started traveling with Jewel, we'd all fly on a private jet. When we got to the US, we'd be playing all over the country but we would hub out of one city. In other words, we'd stay in Chicago for a week to ten days and every day we'd fly to the city where the concert was and then fly back after the show. Lots of other large tours do it that way.

When the gigs got to a different part of the country, we'd move to a different hub, like Houston. It actually made it feel kind of homey. You could have your clothes out and get comfortable in one space. We'd go from the gig to the plane without having to go through the airport because we were on a private jet instead of flying commercially.

When we got there, there'd be a van and it was the same thing in reverse. It was incredibly easy. On the first tour with Jewel, we went around the world twice. After a while, I couldn't imagine myself ever doing another gig.

MD: That sounds like an incredibly long time to be away from home.

Trey: We weren't gone the whole time. We would be out for three or four months and then home for three or four months. It gave me time to consider producing and doing some outside studio work that I hadn't had the opportunity to do before due to the nature of touring with a country act.

MD: Did you get to play on the albums with Jewel?

Trey: The next year she recorded *0304*, which had a lot of loops and stuff. I didn't play on the album, even though we all wrote a song together, so we thought we were going to get to play on it. Abe Laboriel played all the live drums on the record, and he *slammed* it—just great drumming. I was disappointed that I didn't get to record with her, but that was just the reality of the situation. We went back out to do the promo for the record for ten weeks in the spring of 2003, and we were to start the world tour in September. They gave us the summer off and I went back home.

MD: Did you lose the connections to country music by staying out so long with Jewel?

Trey: Once I got the Jewel gig, I didn't sever the ties to the country gigs. In fact, all of a sudden I got a little more respect. I got to go back and do some spot dates with Faith and SheDaisy, and started doing some independent projects in Nashville and LA, doing preproduction for records during the empty spots in Jewel's tour.

MD: What did you do in the months before the next Jewel tour started?

Trey: I got lucky again. I got a call from Danny Millner, the bandleader for Brooks & Dunn. I've known most of the guys in that band for several years. They were headlining a huge tour, and their drummer wanted to leave for another gig. They asked if I wanted to come out and play the rest of the tour. I

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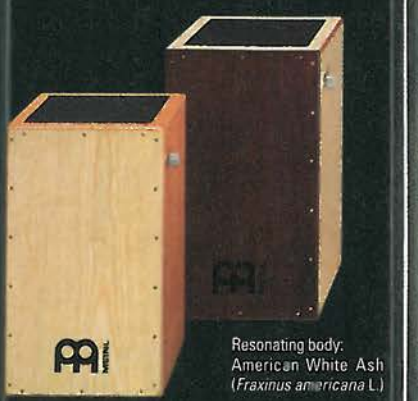

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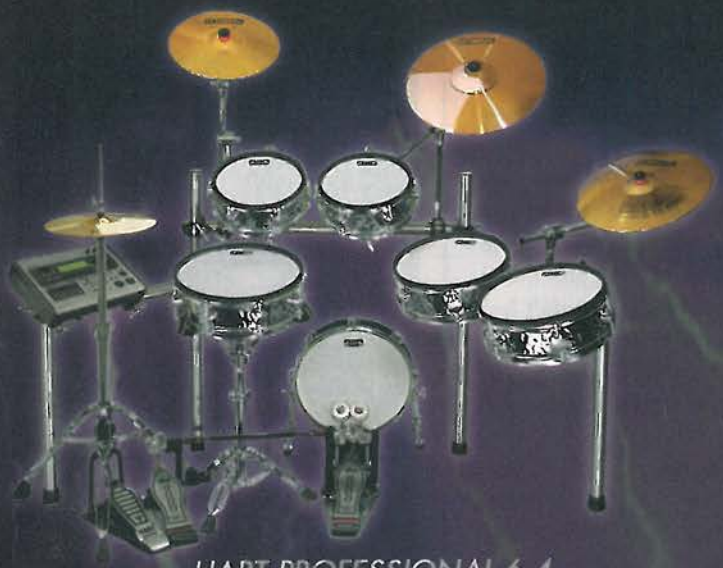

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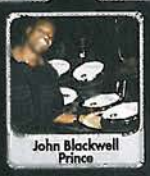
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told them I had a commitment in September to go back out with Jewel, but they were okay with that since their tour would have been over by then. They gave me a live CD and the CDs with the songs they were playing and told me to just be myself and not concern myself too much with playing parts.

My first night was at Hershey Park in Pennsylvania. All my buddies with the other bands—there were five bands on the tour—were on the side of the stage watching me to see what I'd do. It was a very different gig. I'd been backing female vocalists for several years and all of a sudden I was backing these two *guys*. I really liked the gig.

MD: That was some pretty serendipitous scheduling. To have a few months off from a major pop tour and get to fill those dates with a major country act is pretty amazing. Sounds like you were living the good life.

Trey: Well, it was good while it lasted. I was going to have to miss the last two gigs of the Brooks & Dunn tour so I could join up with the Jewel tour. Then as soon as I got home after the B&D tour—and right before I was to go out with Jewel—I found out I was going to be a father!

MD: What a way to end a tour.

Trey: Words cannot describe it, but there was bad news coming. The following Tuesday I found out that Jewel's bass player, T-Bone Hannon, had a stroke. T-Bone was like family to me. He died two days later and things just fell apart. No one could see a way to play without him, and the tour got cancelled.

It was really a strained time for me. I had planned on missing the last two shows with Brooks & Dunn to go back to Jewel, but I called to tell them that things were off and that I could complete the tour if they were cool with it. It turned out that they had added another seven dates. They not only said yes, but they went ahead and paid the guy I had lined up to sub for me so I could finish the tour. The Brooks & Dunn guys are really a class act.

MD: It sounds like you may be back into the country scene for a while.

Trey: I'm still touring with Brooks & Dunn, but Lou Toomie [guitar player for B&D and Faith] and I have a Web site business called the www.demodiner.com, which is a professional demo recording service for individuals who write songs but don't have a way to get the music recorded. I think that there are tons of talented songwriters out there with no way to hear their work done right. It just costs too much.

With the advent of computer recording, it's now affordable to get a song recorded without breaking the bank, and still wind up with a great-sounding demo. I really like the production end of things, and arranging. I'm very happy to have people calling me because they have faith in me to do that for them.

MD: You also have a studio at your home?

Trey: Yes. My home studio is a project studio. I produced my first record with a band called Xploya this year. I didn't do any playing on the project. I just did my best to get the best performance from the band and get it recorded right. We didn't use a bunch of samples, just raw playing. I recently played on a record for an indy rock band called Crockett, and I've also been doing some other album projects in LA.

MD: Is there anything else you're working on now that you'd like folks to know about?

Trey: I'm really excited about a project I'm working on with Perry Parker, a popular children's book author. I'm writing, producing, and arranging the music for his recorded books.

MD: Let's talk about your gear for a minute. I've noticed that you play the same setup now as you did when I met you almost ten years ago. Why the minimalist setup?

Trey: Because I haven't learned to play that setup yet! Simplicity in music is what I feel in my soul. I don't hear a lot of fills. If I do hear a fill, it's usually a one- or two-note thing. By leaving out a lot of stuff, it makes it so much more meaningful when I *do* play a fill. I'm really concerned about time and feel, and I want the people I'm playing with to feel comfortable and supported. In the kind of gigs I do, that's what's important.

MD: Do you still practice once the tour starts, or is it enough just to play every night?

Trey: I still play on a practice pad or on a set with mesh heads for at least thirty minutes a day, whether I'm on the road or not.

MD: What's up with your stick thing? I've noticed two different-colored sticks in your hands.

Trey: I have bursitis in my left shoulder, which is my snare drum side. So I use an aluminum Ahead stick in that hand. It reduces the amount of stick shock and fatigue that I would otherwise get from a wood stick. In my right hand I use a Vater

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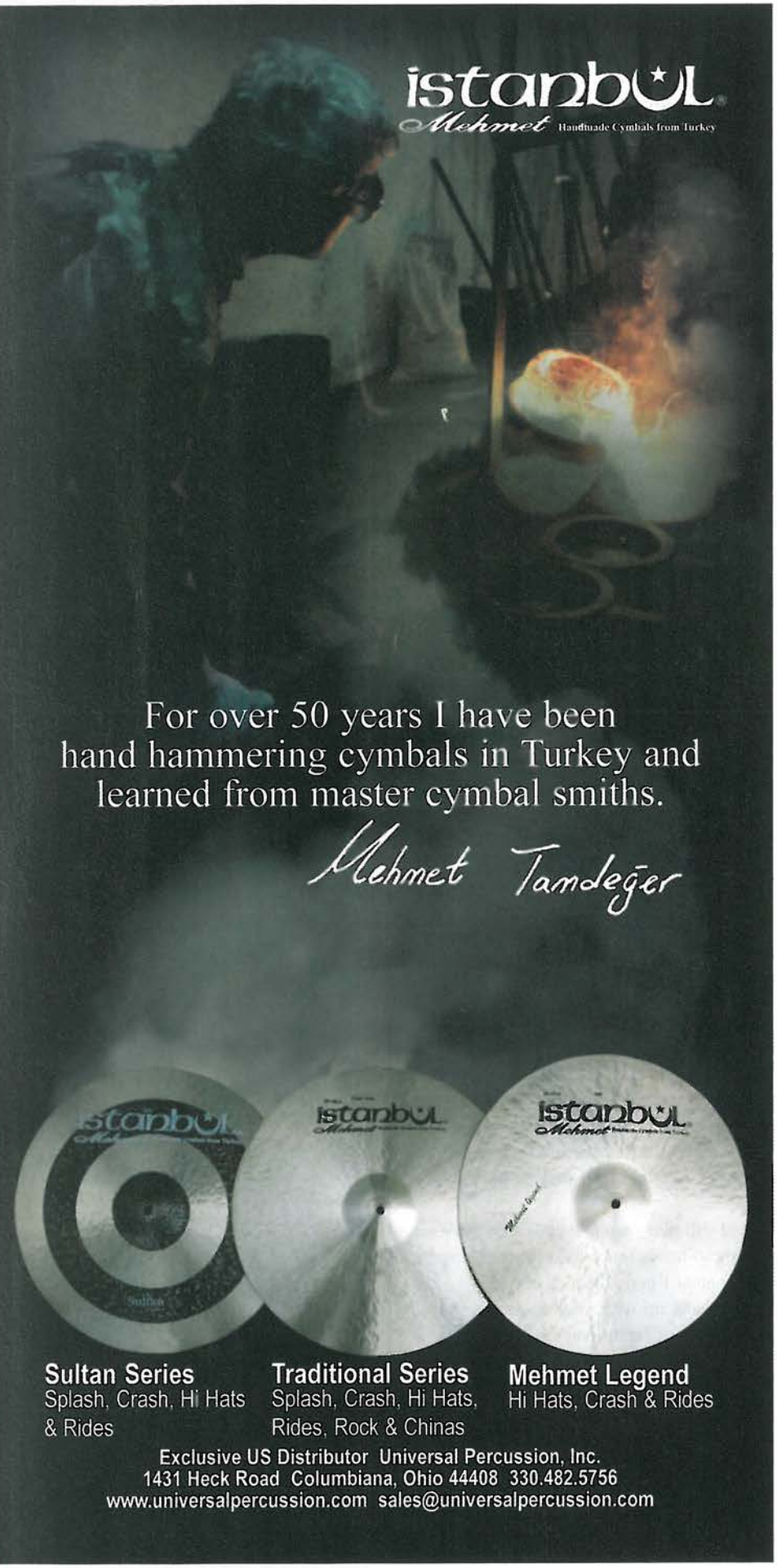

Trey Gray

1A that they cut an inch off for me. So it's a short 1A. That seems to do the trick.

MD: Let's talk a little about the tech issues of concert-level playing. Do you use a click track or backing tracks with Brooks & Dunn?

Trey: Yes. All the tours I've played on have used a click due to some extra things that are flown in, like loops and extra backing vocals. Just about all the studio work up to now has been to a click as well. But on the Caris Matthews record I just completed, we did several tracks without a click. It was an emotional experience, kind of like being a kid playing in the garage again.

MD: Do you have any tips for staying fresh on a long tour?

Trey: Mentally and physically, don't overdo anything extracurricular. Always try to go for walks and see something of the city you're playing in. Go find a local drum teacher and either take a lesson or just take him to lunch and pick his brain. You'll meet a lot of interesting people and learn something from every one of them.

MD: What's your favorite method of monitoring?

Trey: In-ear monitors are the best for me.

MD: Do you use a butt shaker?

Trey: No, I prefer a sub monitor, but if I can't have that it's no big deal. I'm very easy when it comes to that. The music doesn't care one way or the other. So I've adopted that same attitude towards monitors. If everybody's using a wedge, I'm fine with that. If monitors are in short supply, I don't have to have one. It's enough just to play.

MD: What's your take on drum techs?

Trey: I've had three drum techs so far in my career who have gone above and beyond the call to help me sound better and look good. It's kind of embarrassing for me to have someone set up my drums, because I don't like the thought that people would think I'm too good to do it myself. I would pack them up and carry them on my back to the gig if I had to.

Chris Dowis was the first tech that I had with Faith. He was such a good kid that I felt like he was my brother. My tech with Jewel was Chris Achset, and my B&D tech is Johnny Seay. These guys make me look good and sound good every night. They probably like me a lot too because my kit is so small!

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LOS LONELY BOYS

NATHAN FOLLOWILL
KINGS OF LEON

RONNIE VANNUCCI
THE KILLERS

JOSE PASILLAS
INCUBUS

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SENSES FAIL

JORDAN MANCINO
AS I LAY DYING

JASON BITTNER
SHADOWS FALL

CHRIS ADLER
LAMB OF GOD

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2005
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Jason Bittner has played TAMA drums since 1987 when he got the original Superstar set pictured above (check out those '80s-style power toms!). So who's got better creds to conduct a road test on the new Superstars–and not just on any road test–two months of no-holds-barred pounding on the Shadows Fall/Slipknot tour?

Jason's pre-tour reaction: "I was really surprised at how well the drums did sound for a 'quote/unquote midline' kit. They tuned up easily. The Titanium Fade finish is amazing. When I sat down and played the kit, I immediately noticed the difference between birch and maple, which is what I currently play on."

Jason's post-tour verdict: "The Superstar kit peformed great. The shells have the birch feel and attack which made the kit easy to play for me–and anything that makes your job easier is good. I like the sound of maple, but I may go back to playing birch. I really like the fact that a player who can't necessarily afford a Starclassic set can still get an amazing kit that will handle an arena tour. The new Superstars have the clarity and the sound. They don't cost an arm and a leg and that speaks for itself."

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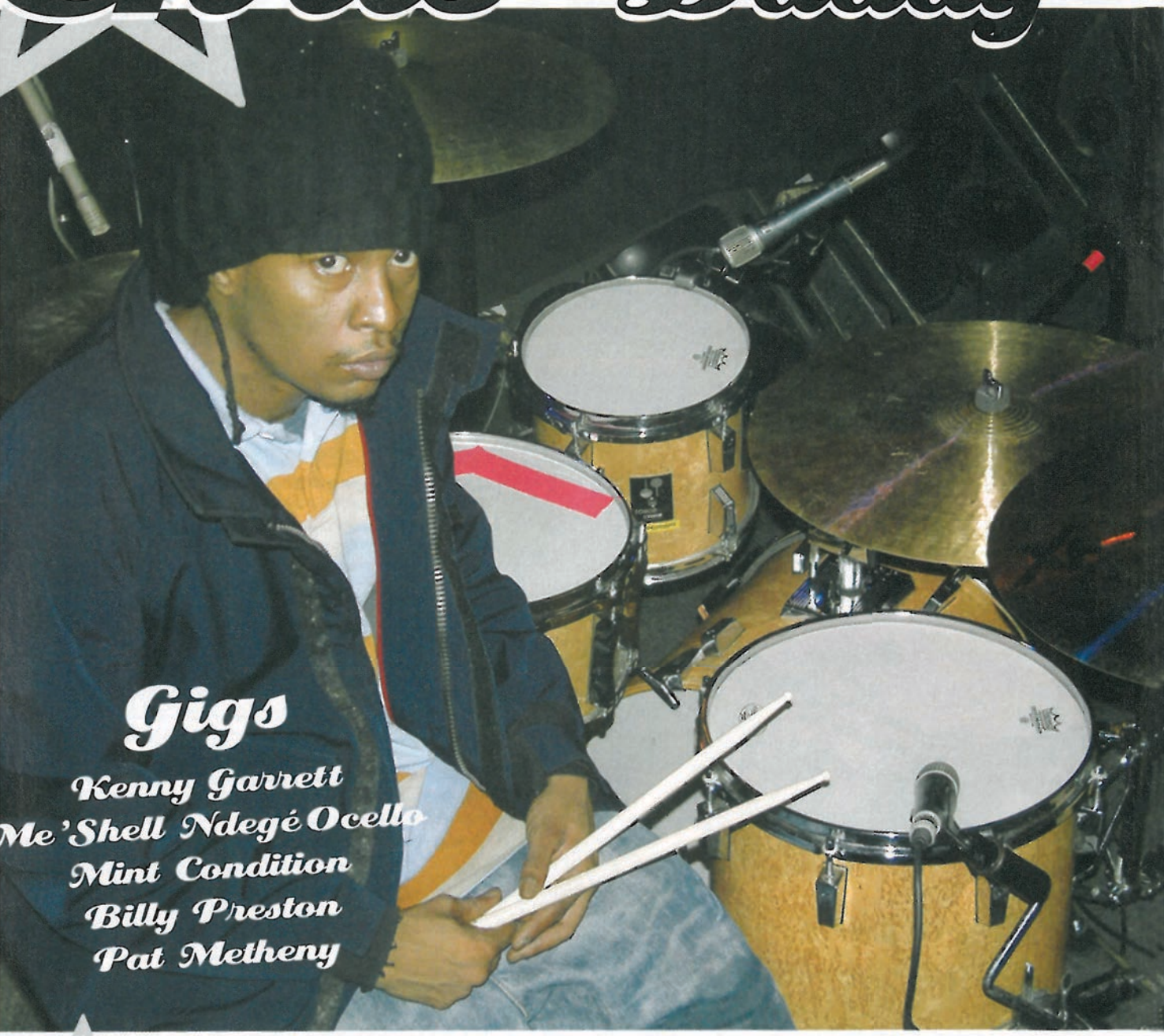
Shown here in Custom Titanium Fade finish

Chris "Daddy"



The cliché of the versatile drummer who can play numerous styles has never been more prevalent than today, when, aided by CD reissues of everything from jazz and rock to Irish music and mystical Sufi songs, the studious musician can envision himself tackling mountains of drumming diversity. Instructional videos, CD mixes of fave drummers traded between friends, and even bootlegged DVDs add up to a list of requirements that can intimidate a young drummer just trying to master the rudiments, much less become a master of styles.

But for as many drummers who claim they swing like Philly Joe Jones *and* cover the rhythmic intricacies of Clyde Stubblefield, Carlton Barrett, or Dennis Chambers, those who have actually recorded in those styles are thin on the ground indeed. Into this put-up-or-shut-up world comes Houston's Chris "Daddy" Dave, a tireless, 5'7" drummer whose unique incorporations of funk, jazz, reggae, and rock can be heard on many recordings.

One look at the twenty-seven year-old's résumé will make

Dave

Definition of A Drummer

your head spin. He's a longtime member of alto saxophonist Kenny Garrett's renowned quartet, and he's recorded with Billy Preston, Dolly Parton, and gospel singer Kim Burrell. Dave is scheduled to play the upcoming Montreaux Jazz Festival with Pat Metheny, and he recently recorded a "black opera" featuring Wynton Marsalis that was led by conductor/composer Darren Atwater at New York's Lincoln Center. And as drummer *and* producer, Dave is working on two forthcoming Me'Shell NdegéOcello records, including *Black Gold*, a jazz/trance project featuring heavyweights like Oliver Lake. Dave is also a DJ of sorts, contributing a remix of Radiohead's "National Anthem" to an upcoming album devoted to the celebrated English band. As if all that weren't enough, watch out for a Sabian/Remo clinic tour featuring Dave, Usher's Aaron Spears, and *American Idol*'s Teddy Campbell.

Dave's recorded output is equally diverse: funk escapades with Detroit's R&B ambassadors Mint Condition, big beat work with Mary J. Blige, Lionel Richie, Jon Secada, and Toni Braxton, and smooth-jazz time turnovers with keyboardist Bob Thompson. Solo-wise, Dave is planning an album that he describes as "a journey with strings."

Chris Dave's drumming certainly resembles a journey, strings or not. On Kenny Garrett's *Standard Of Language*, Dave breaks out of the box running, and never looks back. His blistering jazz pulse seems intent on implosion—or at least setting the studio on fire. And his intense energy funnels into an almost maniacal swing feel that pushes Garrett into sheets-of-sound terrain for much of the album.

On Mint Condition's *Livin' Luxury Brown*, Dave creates a mighty pocket, but he also blows up the joint, sounding like Dennis Chambers staging a riot on tracks like "Fallin' Apart," "Mintrolude," and "Mintal," songs that would be sickly-soul-sweet if not for his drumming eruptions. With bassist/composer/visionary Me'Shell NdegéOcello and saxophonist Ron Blake, Dave turns yet another shade of his style, creating unusual grooves influenced by reggae, dub, dance, acid-jazz, and the Gospel church drumming of his youth.

Modern Drummer spoke with Chris Dave on his cell phone as he drove around Houston running errands in preparation for a European tour with Kenny Garrett. When you're this busy, time waits for no one, not even the world's #1 drum magazine!

Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Jerome Marcus

MD: The first three tracks on Kenny Garrett's *Standard Of Language* are a nonstop burn, all up-tempos and wailing. What's the key to maintaining that kind of stamina?

Chris: It comes from approaching it as if you're practicing for an hour and you want to let off some steam—but it's being recorded. And you have to know how to breathe when you play. I used to get tired when I'd play for two hours. Now I breathe differently, like a runner. I pace myself. If you know you can't exert a lot of energy, then practice and gradually work up to a higher energy level.

If my friends were all at home right now and we went to one of their basements to play, it would go for hours, nonstop. Nobody would quit. We used to do that for so long. By the time I recorded *Standard Of Language*, we had done so many tours where all of the songs were like that or much *longer*, sometimes twenty minutes. So playing for seven minutes is cool.

MD: On tracks like Garrett's "Native Tongues" or on Me'Shell NdegéOcello's *Spirit Music Jamia: Dance Of The Infidel*, you play more composed parts. How do you approach those more pop or South African-sounding patterns?

Chris: It comes from the Fela Anikulapo-Kuti records I've been checking out. I like music with grooves. And playing grooves like that are for my mom, dad, and friends back home who don't really know what we're doing. If I play my boys a Kenny Garrett record, or "Giant Steps" in 13/4, they'll say, "Oh, yeah, that's nice." But if you play "Giant Steps" to where they understand the beat, it gets over. I try to merge the two styles whenever I can.

MD: Currently you play jazz with Kenny Garrett, contemporary R&B with Mint Condition, and a kind of exotic jazz/funk fusion with Me'Shell NdegéOcello. Is there a mental switching of gears between styles?

Chris: Each one requires a different mindset. I also play with Billy Preston, and playing with him is so different from any of the other styles because we play Beatles tunes, Sly & The Family Stone tunes, and his tunes. You have to transform yourself.

Of course, an artist will call you because they like the way you play, but you want to integrate your drumming with their music. You try to zone in. It's not easy every time, especially if I'm going from Kenny Garrett to playing in church the next day.

One thing I do to help change my mindset is use different grips. I use both matched and traditional. I'll switch off while I'm playing. Most cats will play the snare traditionally for one feel, and then switch to matched for another feel, which is what I do.

MD: On Ron Blake's album *Sonic Tonic*, your drumming is very clear and deliberate, very high-resolution and in-your-face. Blake is from the Caribbean; did he influence your choice of beats?

Chris: Yes. Whatever beat the musicians started dancing to, that would be the beat I would play on the track. We wanted to have fun. There were no set patterns for the music. Ron let me play whatever I wanted. I would hear the song and play a beat on the spot. If I played the song now it would probably be a *different* beat.

This is the sort of thing I practice all the time, trying to come up with different grooves and beats that evoke different moods, as opposed to coming up with licks. I try to stay away from licks or drum flash. If you're swinging real fast and you play a bunch of fast licks, sure, the crowd will go wild. But ten-year-old kids can play fast licks these days.

Sometimes I'll keep the ride pattern going and then start playing paradiddles between the kick and snare, and then keep accelerating and decelerating the paradiddles while the ride and hi-hat pattern remains constant. That lasts longer than playing some lick.

MD: How did you develop your ride cymbal pattern? It's so smooth and propulsive.

Chris: In my first year with Kenny Garrett, I was able to have access to things I really needed. Instead of just buying albums, I could go to the Zinc Bar in New York and watch Jeff "Tain" Watts play for four hours. That's when he was gigging around town with his own band. Then I could shed with him and figure out how people are making all this stuff happen with their ride not breaking up. I would practice everything with the ride cymbal pattern not breaking up and figure out how to make it work.

If you're playing the ride cymbal and every time you do a particular fill it breaks up the flow of the beat, then you need to work on it. Instead of complaining, I started practicing the lick from slow to real fast. It's just another way of approaching four-way coordination. It's like splitting your brain, something you're physically not used to doing.

MD: Did you get the gig with Kenny

Dave's Innovations

Drums: Innovation Virtuoso series (not shown in photos)
- **A.** 7½x13 snare
- **B.** 10x10 rack tom
- **C.** 12x12 rack tom
- **D.** 14x14 floor tom
- **E.** 14x16 floor tom
- **F.** 14x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian
1. 15" Vault HHXtreme Hats (prototype)
2. 20" Vault thin crash with rivets (prototype)
3. 21" Vault ride with rivets (prototype)
4. 12" Chinese on top of 14" Chinese
5. 18" Ozone crash

Hardware: Sonor and Innovation, Vater Vintage Bomber beater and Jingle Rings

Heads: Remo coated Emperor on snare drum batter with Diplomat snare-side, coated Emperors on tops of toms with clear Diplomats underneath, PowerStroke 4 on bass drum batter with PowerStroke 3 on front

Sticks: Vater Sweet Ride model (maple with wood tip), brushes

"I didn't want to be that cat who says, 'I'm just a funk drummer,' 'I'm just a jazz drummer,' or 'I'm just an R&B drummer.'I don't want to be pigeonholed, ever.

Garrett right after attending Howard University?

Chris: I was playing with Geri Allen out of Howard. I met Kenny while I was hanging out in New York through Foley, who was the bass player with Miles Davis up until Miles died. Playing with Kenny was my first jazz gig. Then I joined Mint Condition in '94.

MD: You play straight-ahead jazz with Kenny Garrett and more of an atmospheric style with Me'Shell NdegéOcello. What's your role with Mint Condition?

Chris: I hold the groove, but I can be explosive whenever I want to be. Stokley Williams, their singer, plays drums too, and we used to practice together all the time. The drummer in the band before me was Michael Bland, who used to play with Prince. So my first goal was to try to get the groove as funky as his, because I was coming from a church feel. I wanted to switch my church feel to a funkier feel with a church vibe. I was thinking, Why can't I play some bebop licks over a funk groove instead of playing the same funk licks as everyone else?

MD: On Mint Condition's latest album, *Livin' The Luxury Brown*, you're practically soloing on tracks like "Fallin' Apart," "Mintrolude," and "Mintal." A lot of R&B drummers get busy live, but it's rare to hear that kind of playing on record.

Chris: I'm currently working on what will be my solo project. That's going to be where I *really* stretch out. But I've never been looking to solo. I just play. But the cats I

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Daddy Gets Down

Chris Dave's Best Recordings:

Artist	Album
Kenny Garrett	Standard Of Language
Kenny Garrett	Happy People
Kenny Garrett	Simply Said
Mint Condition	Livin' The Luxury Brown
Mint Condition	Definition Of A Band
Mint Condition	From The Mint Factory
Mint Condition	Life's Aquarium
Me'Shell NdegéOcello	Comfort Woman
Me'Shell NdegéOcello	The Spirit Music Jamia: Dance Of The Infidel
Ron Blake	Sonic Tonic
Mary J. Blige	Mary
Kim Burrell	Try Me Again
Ali Shaheed Muhammad	Shaheedullah And Stereotypes

respect most, like Dennis Chambers, would tell me, "You can do something with that music." He would call people and tell them they had to hear me play. But I was like, "Please, man, don't say stuff like that." I'm still developing my chops.

MD: Where did you develop your production chops?

Chris: The first day I auditioned for Mint Condition, Stokley asked if I played any other instruments. I said, "I play a little keys and bass guitar." He said I could live so much better if I wrote songs that were recorded by other artists. That's a better way to make a living than just touring all the time.

I started dabbling with writing, though I wasn't really into it at first. But the more I began working with Mint Condition, the more I got interested in it, because we were in the studio all the time. So I started watching [Mint Condition's producers] Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. It then became something I wanted to do.

I eased into producing very slowly. I didn't jump into it like, "I have to buy all this studio gear and become a producer." I was just quiet and watched a lot. I began working with different people, and luckily they dug what I came up with. Now I have a home studio where I just produced a band called Foundation and another artist named Kay, both on the Garden Seeker label, which is run by A Tribe Called Quest's Ali Shaheed Muhammad. I also produced and played on his album, *Shaheedullah And Stereotypes*.

MD: You attended Houston's High School for Performing and Visual Arts with classmates Terreon Gully, Mark Simmons, Eric Harland, Land Richards, and Kendrick Scott. What is it about that school's educational system that produced all these exceptional drummers?

Chris: The teachers and the system there make you learn reading and theory early on. We all were also playing in church on the side, so we got a taste of everything at a young age. There's a lot of practicing required at the school. The teachers tell you what to practice to improve your technique, your sight reading, and your transcribing. Competition also plays into it. We all grew up together, we used to practice together, and we battled each other. We all played different things, though, so it wasn't *that* competitive. It was more about trying to figure out what the other person was doing.

MD: What did you focus on?

Chris: I was trying to figure out Elvin Jones, and at the same time Gene Lake and Marvin "Smitty" Smith, who were playing with Steve Coleman's M-Base. I was exploring the old and the new at the same time. I wanted to hear a drummer who could play all kinds of music and sound different when he played different styles.

MD: Were there particular chops-builders you used for technique?

Chris: I practiced on pillows and worked on my independence using Marvin Dahlgren's *4-Way Coordination: A Method Book For The Development Of Complete Independence On The Drum Set*. I would read the lines and play the patterns backwards and forwards. Then I would mix and match the different lines. It opened me up to new ways of thinking, things I wouldn't normally play. My teachers would open the book and say, "Bet you can't play this." It was so awkward at first. It made you split your brain and superimpose ideas.

MD: What chops-builders do you continue to use?

Chris: Four or five years ago I had a minor case of carpal tunnel. My technique was crazy then. I would play things real fast and the shock to my hands would be too much. After that I went to a hand specialist and he gave me exercises to do before I play, stretching exercises with sticks. Drumming is like running. You have to stretch beforehand.

MD: What do you practice now?

Chris: I'll practice sometimes five days a week, concentrating on rudiments and trying to fuse four-way coordination with different groove ideas I'm working on. It could be something as simple as how my stick is hitting the ride cymbal, to things I know I'm weak at, just to maintain my technique.

MD: On all your records you tune the snare very high.

Chris: We have this thing about that in Houston. People who tune the snare kind of loose usually have singles that aren't really fast. The tighter you tune the head, the harder it is to cheat. So we would tune the snare drum head real tight so you could tell that we're doing singles and not doubles. The boys would be on you hard, so you couldn't fake it.

MD: Do you rely mostly on using fingers or wrist movements?

Chris: I do use fingers, but my hands are very small. I'm more of a wrist player because for some reason I keep grabbing the

sticks real tight. It's weird. Sometimes when I play with Kenny Garrett, we might be in an outside venue so I'll use nylon tips on the cymbal, but still use the wooden-tip sticks on the snare.

MD: Your snare drum and cymbals are very dry-sounding. Do you try to match those two upper-register sounds?

Chris: Yes, and I like the toms to have a good spread just so I can hear a difference in them when I go from high to low. I like the toms to sing, but sometimes I like the bass drum to be muffled. Other times the bass drum could be open. It depends on whether they'll let me do it in the studio. Usually the engineer wants a certain sound.

MD: You're a little guy. How do you sit at the drums?

Chris: I basically stand up, I sit so high. I am short and I like to see the audience. I got used to sitting that high, and I'm comfortable looking over the drums. I also like to be on top of them so I can hit everything quickly. I don't like to reach. And I play both heel-up and heel-down.

MD: When did you start playing the drums?

Chris: I was five or six. The drums were always at the church. I played drums in the Greater New Grove Baptist Church until I went to Howard University, but I still play in church now. Everybody I know plays in church. That's where you can get it out. You can't really play like that on tour.

MD: Was your family musical?

Chris: My mom sang in church and my dad played drums in the army, but he won't play for me now. That sucks, right? He'll crack jokes like, "I should sit down and show you something right quick, but, nah, that's alright." But you have to be pretty good to play in the army.

By the time I got out of high school, my goal was to know five hundred standards so I could sit in with anybody. I went from there to listening to all sorts of music. That's how I learned about Carlton Barrett. He had a great feel. From him I started investigating all sorts of Jamaican drummers. I just have to keep checking out different kinds of music.

I try not to be close-minded about music. I didn't want to be that cat who says, I'm just a funk drummer, I'm just a jazz drummer, or I'm just an R&B drummer. I don't want to be pigeonholed, ever.

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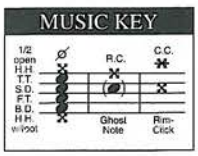
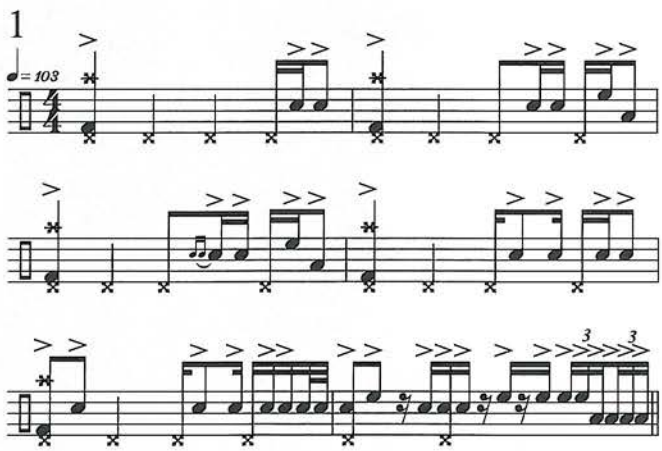
Traffic's Jim Capaldi
His Early Years

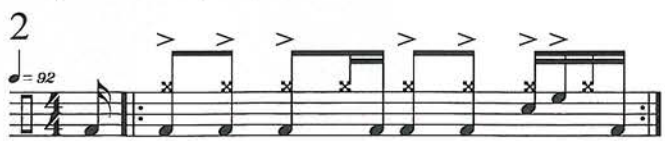
by Ed Breckenfeld

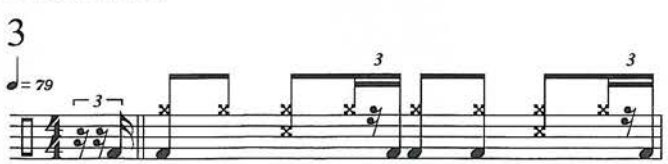
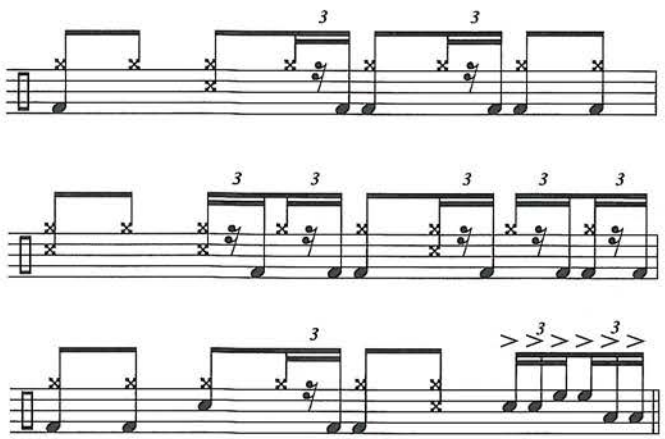


Earlier this year, the drumming community lost another historically important figure with the passing of Jim Capaldi. As one of the original members of the late-'60s British rock band Traffic, Capaldi laid down a solid rhythmic foundation for leader Steve Winwood's unique blend of R&B and psychedelic pop. By the early '70s, Capaldi relinquished the drum chair to Jim Gordon and Roger Hawkins as he moved towards a career as a singer/songwriter. But it's his energetic drum grooves on classic early Traffic recordings that we pay tribute to this month.

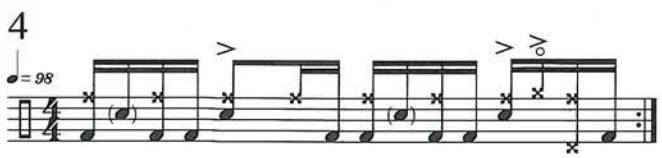
"Smiling Phases" (from *Mr. Fantasy*, 1968)

Capaldi's opening six-bar drum solo over escalating chord changes gets this track off to a roaring start. Notice the timekeeping left-foot hi-hat pattern. (0:00)

"Heaven Is In Your Mind" (*Mr. Fantasy*)

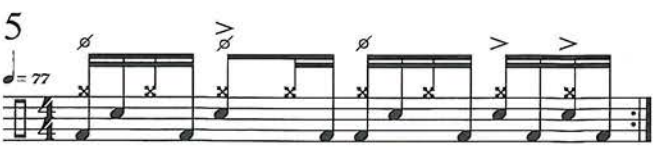
The unexpected tom hit after the snare on beat 4 gives this groove its unique character. (0:55)

"Dear Mr. Fantasy" (*Mr. Fantasy*)

Jim playfully turns around the beat in this sequence from the first verse of the song. The "swing" feel in the bass drum pattern adds a wonderful effect under Winwood's straight 16th-note, finger-picked guitar part. (0:36)



"Don't Be Sad" (from *Traffic*, 1968)

Here's another instance of Capaldi shaking up a smooth groove with an offbeat accent. This time it's a left-hand open hi-hat in the midst of a ride cymbal pattern. (1:03)

"Cryin' To Be Heard" (*Traffic*)

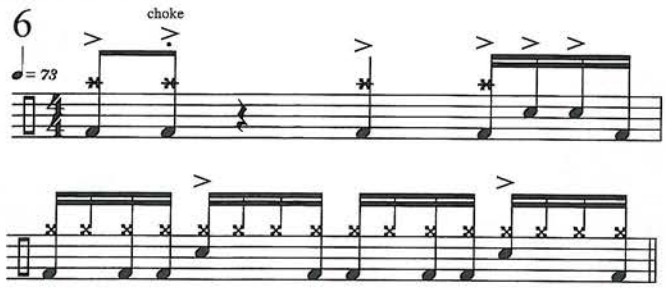
Subtle semi-open hi-hats deepen the groove of Capaldi's syncopated beat from the jam-out ending of Dave Mason's tune. (4:12)



"Shanghai Noodle Factory" (from *Last Exit*, 1969)

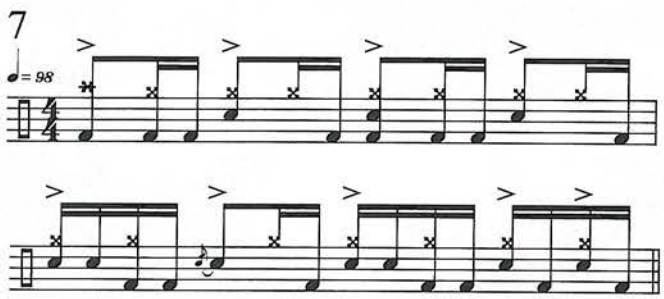
The relaxed, "snakey" feel of Jim's 16th-note hi-hat pattern is the

perfect bed for this slow, funky track. (2:26)



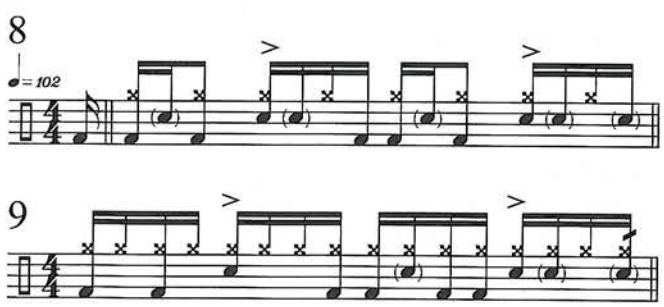
"Medicated Goo" (*Last Exit*)

The quarter-note snare pattern was one of Capaldi's favorites, which he builds into by the third verse on this tune, one of Traffic's most overtly R&B cuts. In typical fashion, he plays around with some variations in this sequence. (1:51)



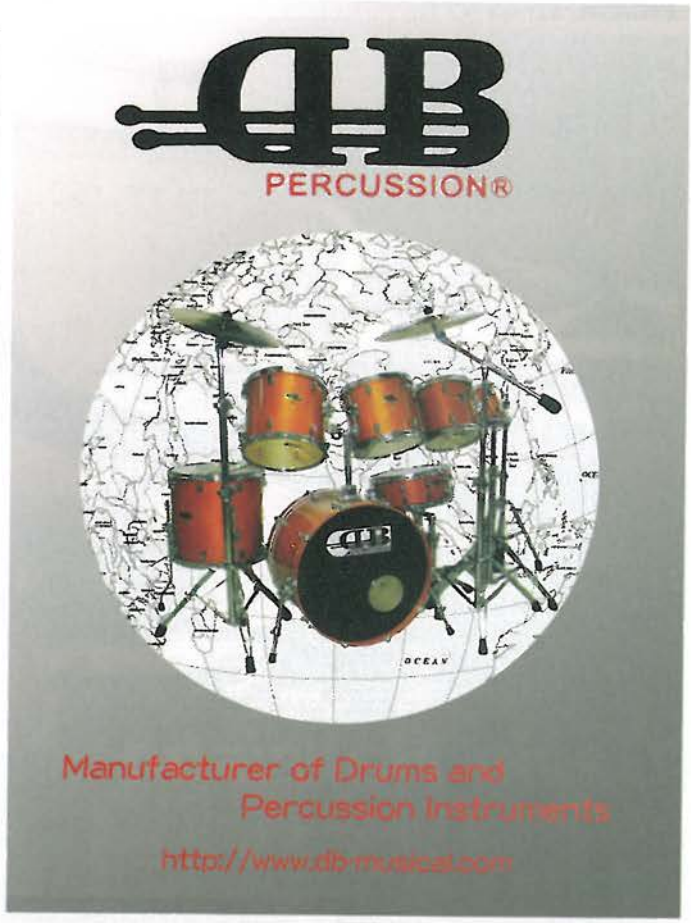
"Empty Pages" (from *John Barleycorn Must Die*, 1970)

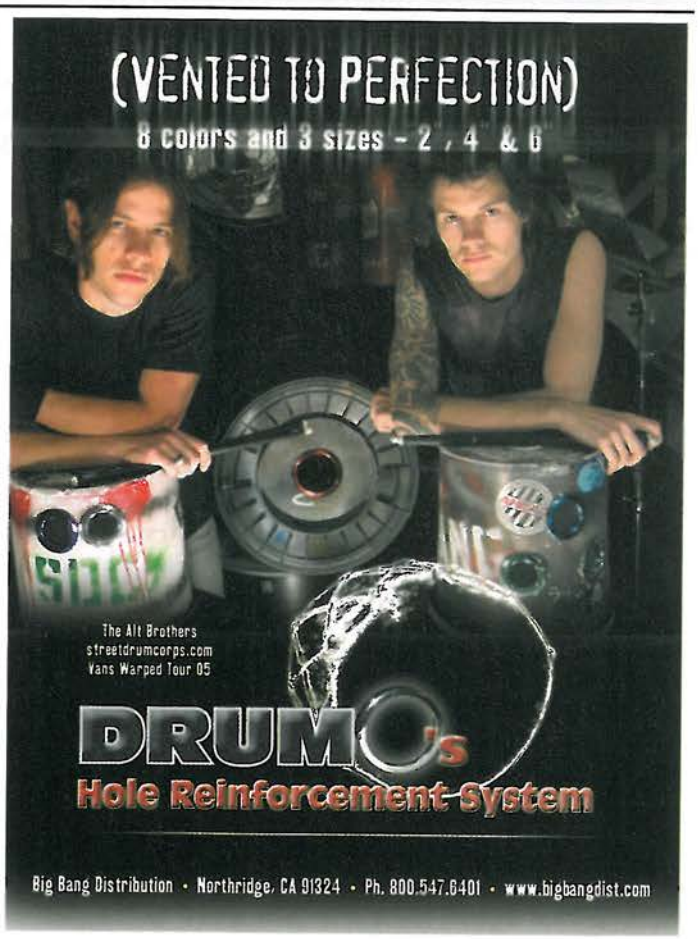
This is my favorite Capaldi performance. Example 8 contains his exceptional ghost-note groove from the song's first verse (0:45), while Example 9 shows his switch to 16th notes on the hi-hat during Winwood's piano solo (2:06). And the notes tell only part of the story here. The incredible feel in this section comes from the slight swing of Jim's fast one-handed 16ths. It's a magical moment in rock drumming history.

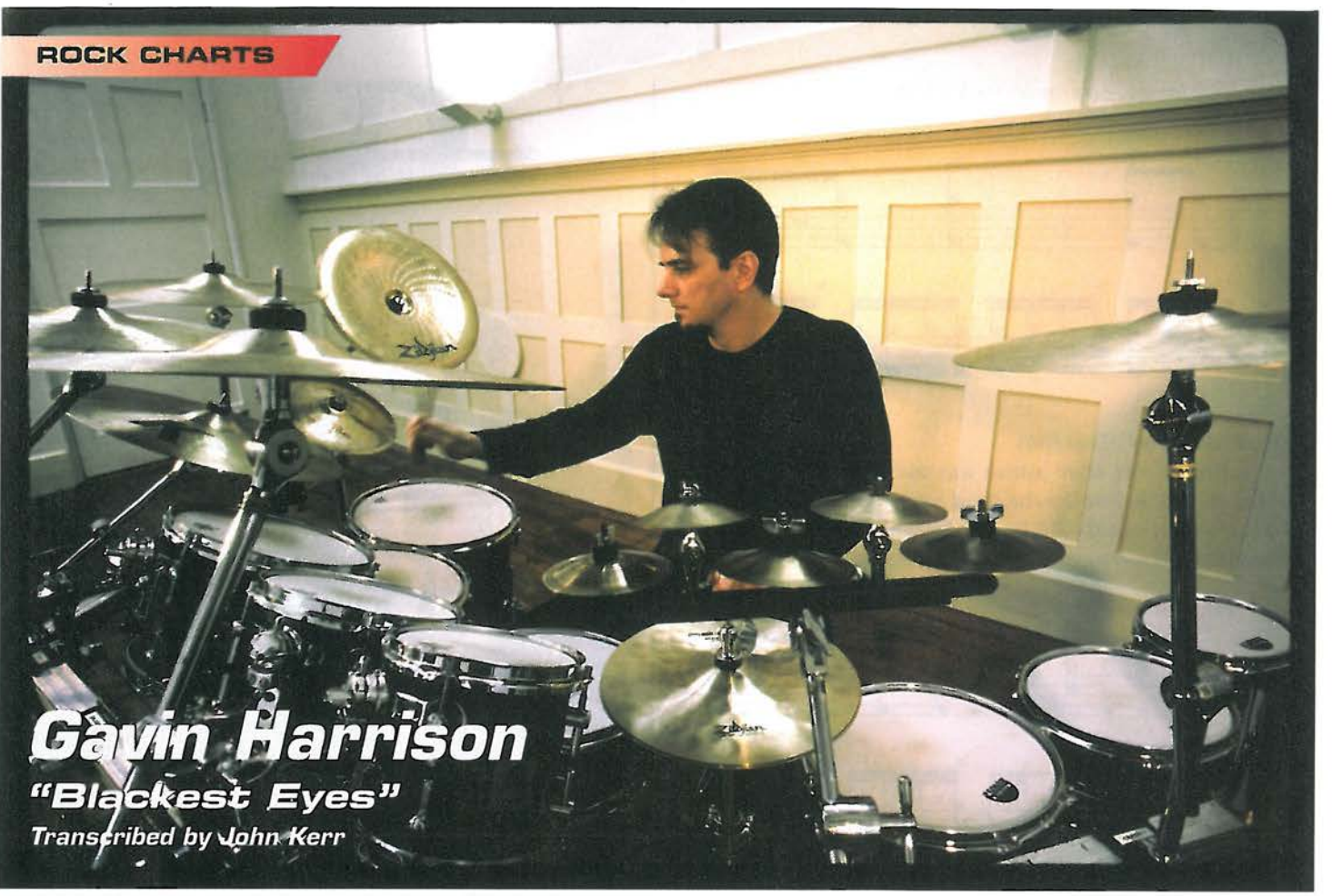


You can contact Ed Breckenfeld through his Web site at www.edbreckenfeld.com.

To hear these tracks from Jim Capaldi and Traffic, tune in to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com

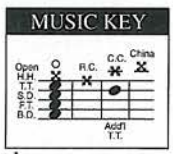






Gavin Harrison

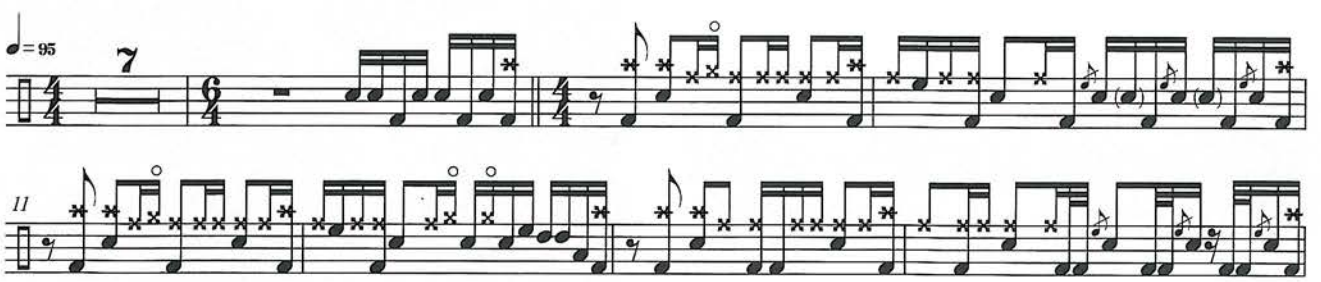
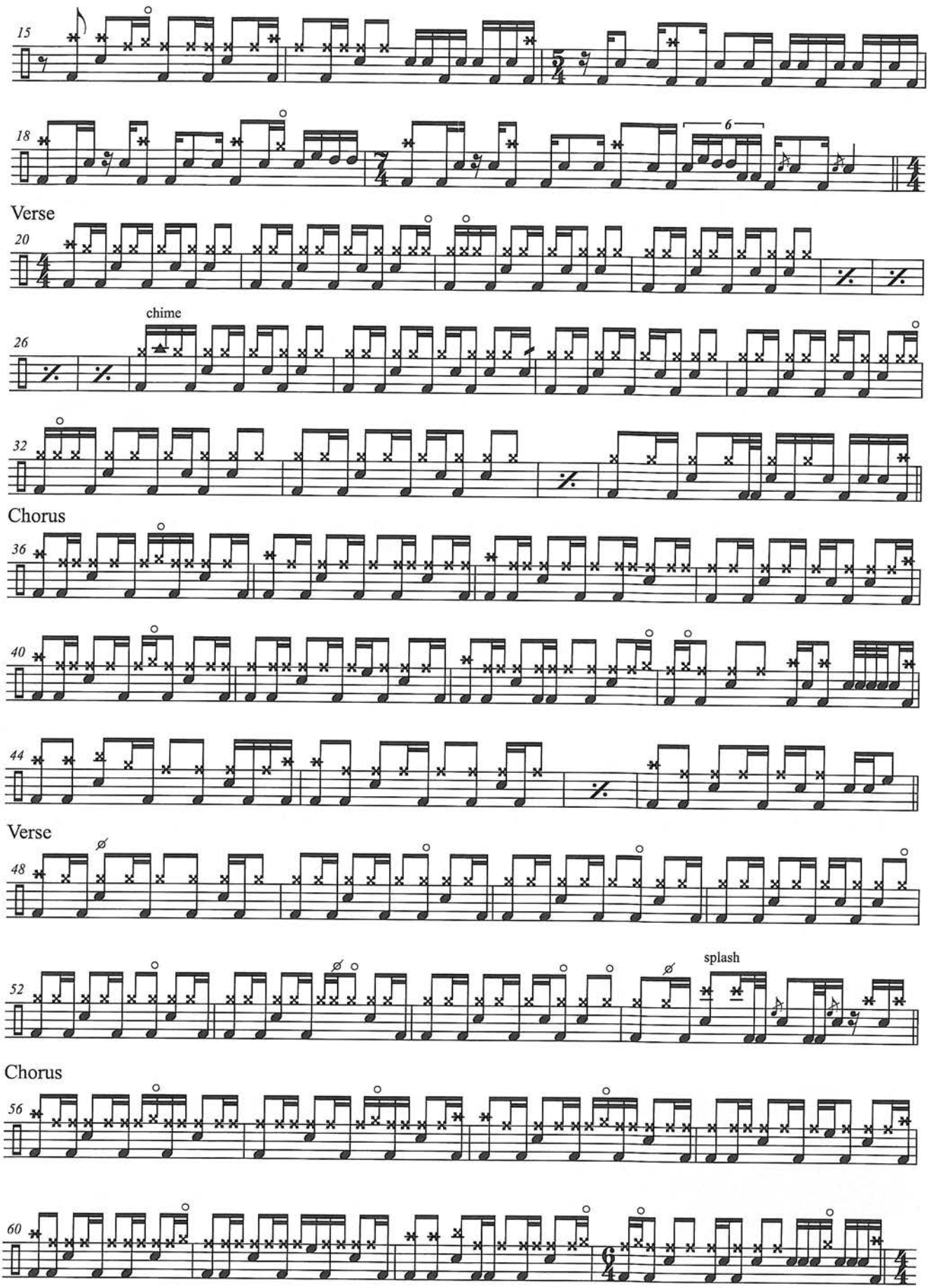
"Blackest Eyes"

Transcribed by John Kerr

Gavin Harrison, who is well known for his educational publications *Rhythmic Illusions* and *Rhythmic Perspectives* and the DVD *Rhythmic Visions*, has appeared on the last two efforts by British art rock band Porcupine Tree.

The band's latest offering, *Deadwing*, has just been released. (See the review on page 159.) However, this month's *Rock Chart*, "Blackest Eyes," is from their 2002 album *In Absentia*. After the sparse intro, Harrison comes in aggressively, reinforcing the accents of the syncopated guitar riff with some nice bass drum ruffs and loose flams between the snare and toms. Measures 17–19 transition into odd meters, but they're easier to navigate if you sing along with the guitar riff. Also, notice the shuffle-sounding rhythmic illusion between the bass drum and snare during these measures.

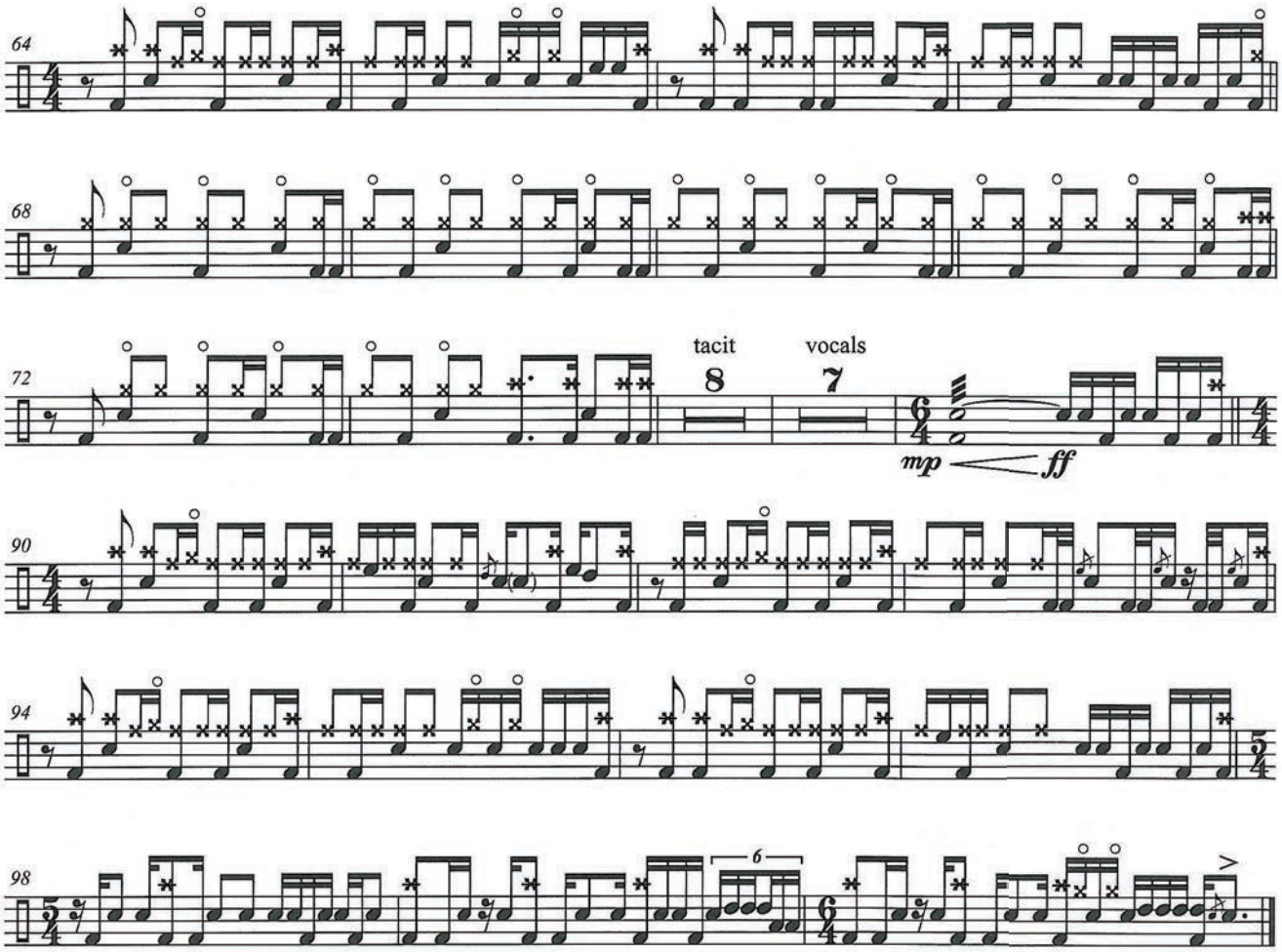
The verse comes down to a simmer as Harrison decorates the beat with sparse bell chimes, splashes, and open hi-hats. In the choruses, the ride cymbal dances around the rhythm guitar track while the other hand throws in off-beat 16th notes on the hi-hats, snare, and toms. In the short middle section (measures 68–73), the band drops into a driving riff. Here, Gavin plays staccato hi-hat opens on the downbeats that give the heavy groove a sense of articulation.

With so many chops and creative ideas, it's easy to overlook the fact that Gavin ties his parts together with a wonderful sense of *dynamics*. This is an essential component to his drumming that makes the Porcupine Tree sound so appealing.



15
18
6
Verse
20
chime
26
32
Chorus
36
40
44
Verse
48
52
splash
Chorus
56
60

Gavin Harrison



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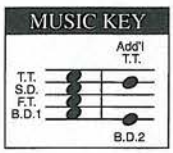
Double Bass Drumming

Part 9: Combination Fills

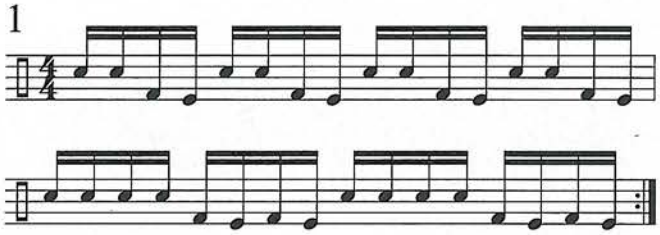
by Rod Morgenstein



My previous two articles focused on double bass drum fills, with the feet playing two or four consecutive notes in a row. An additional amount of excitement can be added to these fills if they combine both two and four consecutive notes on the bass drums.

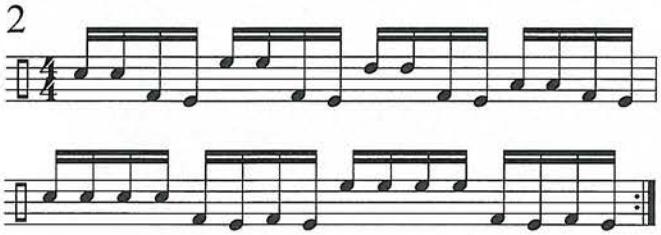
Let's begin with 16th-note fill patterns. In Example 1, the first measure consists of two consecutive notes on the bass drums, while the second has four consecutive notes.

1



Examples 2 and 3 are orchestrations of Example 1.

2



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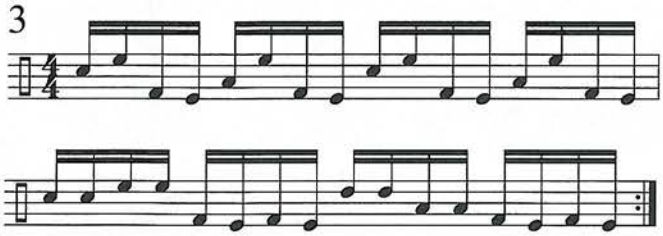
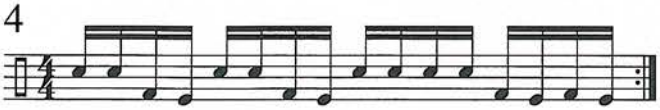


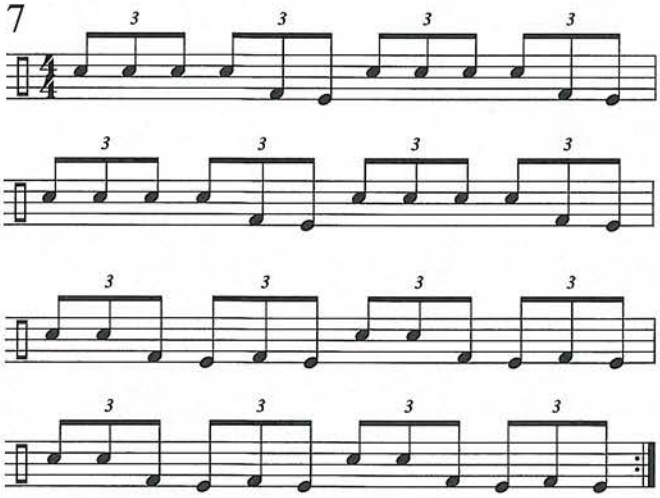
Example 4 follows the same fill concept but is only one measure in length.

4

Examples 5 and 6 are orchestrations of Example 4.

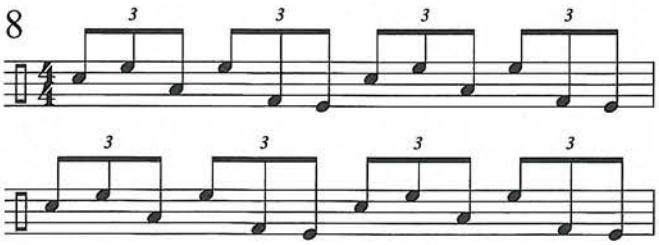
5

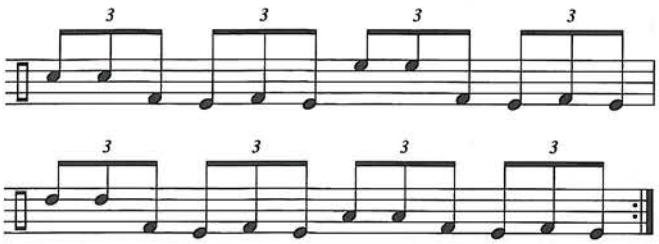
6

Examples 7 through 13 deal with 8th-note-triplet fill patterns. Example 7 is four measures long, with the first and second measures consisting of two consecutive notes on the bass drums, and the third and fourth measures having four consecutive notes.

7

Example 8 is an orchestration of Example 7.

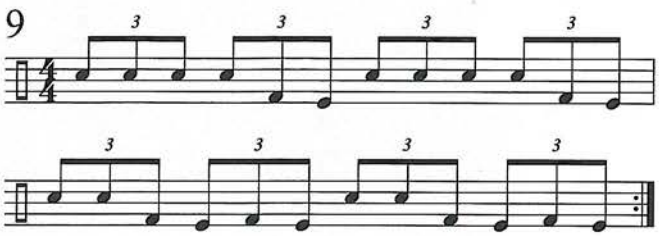
8





Examples 9 through 11 follow the same fill concept but are two measures in length, while Examples 12 and 13 are one measure long.

9



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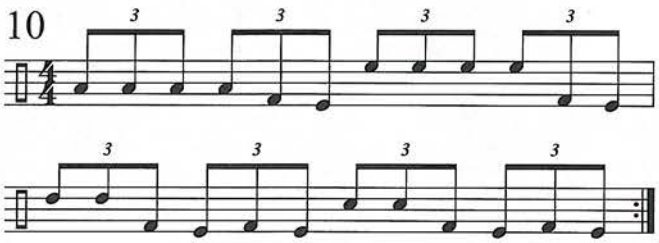
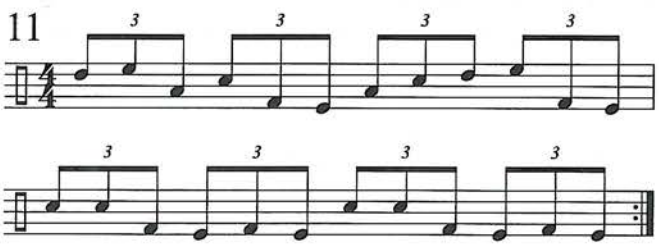
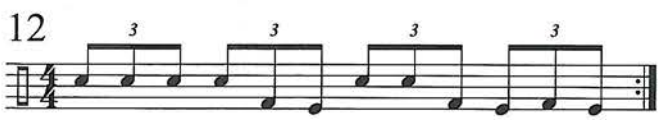


11



12

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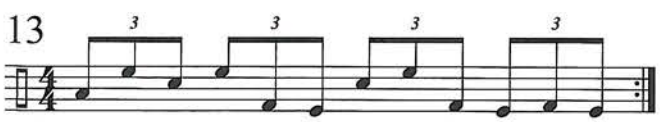
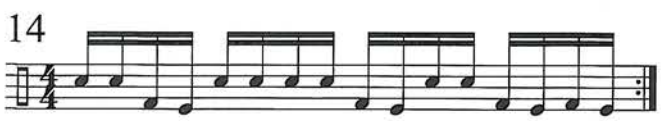
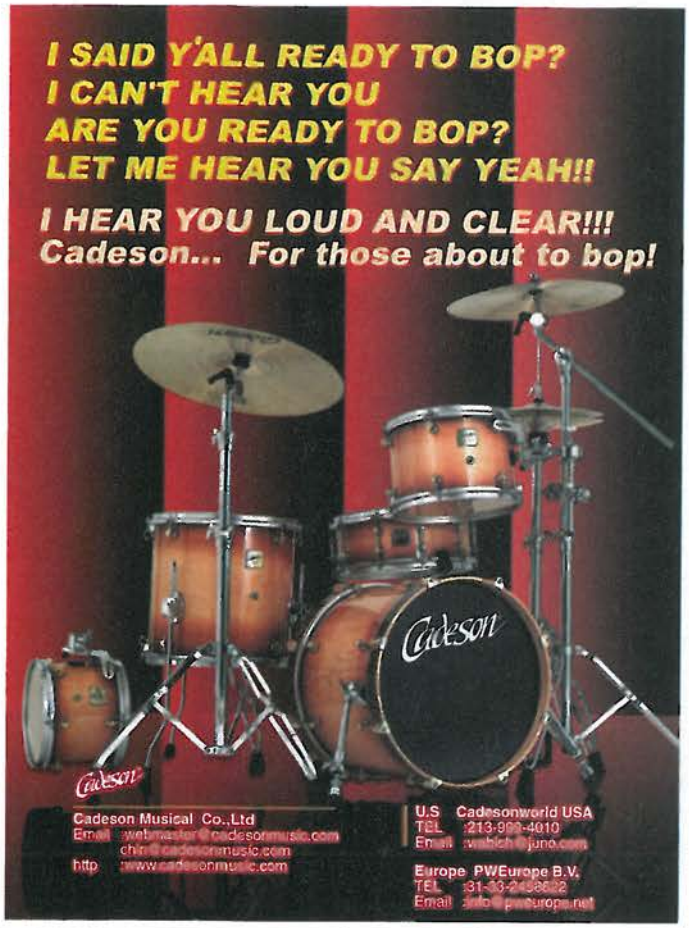
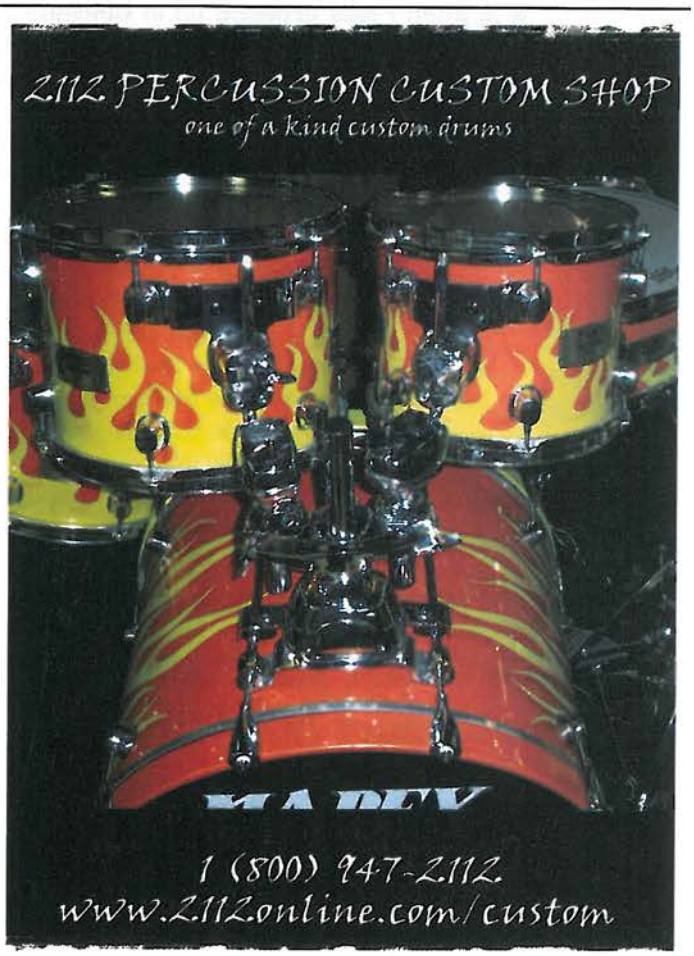

Examples 14 and 15 are 16th-note-based patterns that have a paradiddle feel. (The paradiddle is felt on the 8th notes.)

14

15

Next month we'll go even further with double bass fill possibilities. Drum on!





A Whole New Ballgame

Dealing With A Changing Industry

by Billy Ward

T. Bruce Watter

When I was growing up in Cincinnati, I was obsessed with playing better. I worked on all kinds of techniques based on what I was listening to. When I was sixteen, I remember it being Chicago (Danny Seraphine, yeah!), a touch of Miles Davis (Tony Williams), and a whole lot of Art Blakey—who seemed to be the most powerful, articulate drummer in my listening world. Commerce, or the ability for me to earn a living at my drumming, never was a factor in my studies or desires. I always assumed that if I could play well, I would automatically have a band in which to play (and make money).

The naiveté of my expected future success hit home when I moved to New York City in 1976 to be a jazz musician. Well, at that time jazz was in a decline. Miles Davis had "retired." Ex-Blakey trumpeter Lee Morgan had just been shot and killed—by his wife, no less! The only jazz that was experiencing commercial success was the ultra-conservative rehash of the Blue Note period. Everything seemed topsy-turvy. Was jazz dead?

"It's now guerilla warfare. Work from your own neighborhood out. Do your thing. You are free."

But then I went to a club on the Upper West Side of New York called Mikell's, where I saw a band called Stuff. It featured drummers Steve Gadd and Chris Parker. Stuff was new and fresh. The two drummers were lovingly leaving space for each other and carrying each song to its most grooving spot—and they *held* it there. Wow, they were original, yet they were all about the history of the groove. They were obviously doing exactly what they wanted to be doing, and yet they were also somehow naturally in sync with the commercial world around them. Going home to put on an Anthony Braxton record after hearing Stuff made me feel like an alien. What could I do?

It took me about four years of trying in New York before it was clear to me that I had to give up on the idea of playing jazz professionally. I couldn't find players to play with. I still look back at that time and wonder if I was unsuccessful because I wasn't very good at it, or because my influences were too spread out. Maybe my networking chops were untrained. (I didn't know the word "networking" then.) I seemed to be a jazzy rock drummer, or a rock-like jazz

drummer. I certainly didn't seem to fit into the molds that were present at the time.

It Was Time To Evolve

After getting a gig touring with a singer-songwriter named Dean Friedman, I realized that there was a whole lot of playing going on in the pop world. But my transition from jazz to rock was difficult. After recording my first "rock" album (with Dean in '79), I was fired for not having good enough time. There's no motivation like failure, so I delved into solving my time problems wholeheartedly.

The biggest thing I noticed was that, in jazz, it seemed as if the time could be "expressive" or flexible, but the feel must remain intact. In rock, it seemed to be exactly the *opposite*. The time is cement and cannot move, but the feel can be messed with. I eventually succeeded in transforming myself into a pop or rock drummer.

One of the things that helped me do that was imitating successful drummers and putting into my hands exactly what they were doing. This is why I emphasize it so much in my teaching. (Imitate your favorites.) Harvey Mason was the first template that I studied. I paid attention to whatever template was going on in the musical world, and I began trying to fit into each new style.

There were other templates in the music business then. It seemed that looks really mattered, more so than ever before. In the early '80s, with MTV blossoming, the big-buck gigs seemed to require one to be "photogenic." (Oh, Billy Idol is looking for a drummer? Am I skinny enough? I'll wear that torn T-shirt and go for it!) The next twenty years celebrated the reign of MTV and big record labels (with their big record deals).

I invested *years* playing in project bands, hoping to be discovered for that shot at stardom and the big record deal. Some of the bands were good, too, but none of them were sincerely speaking from my heart.

That was then.

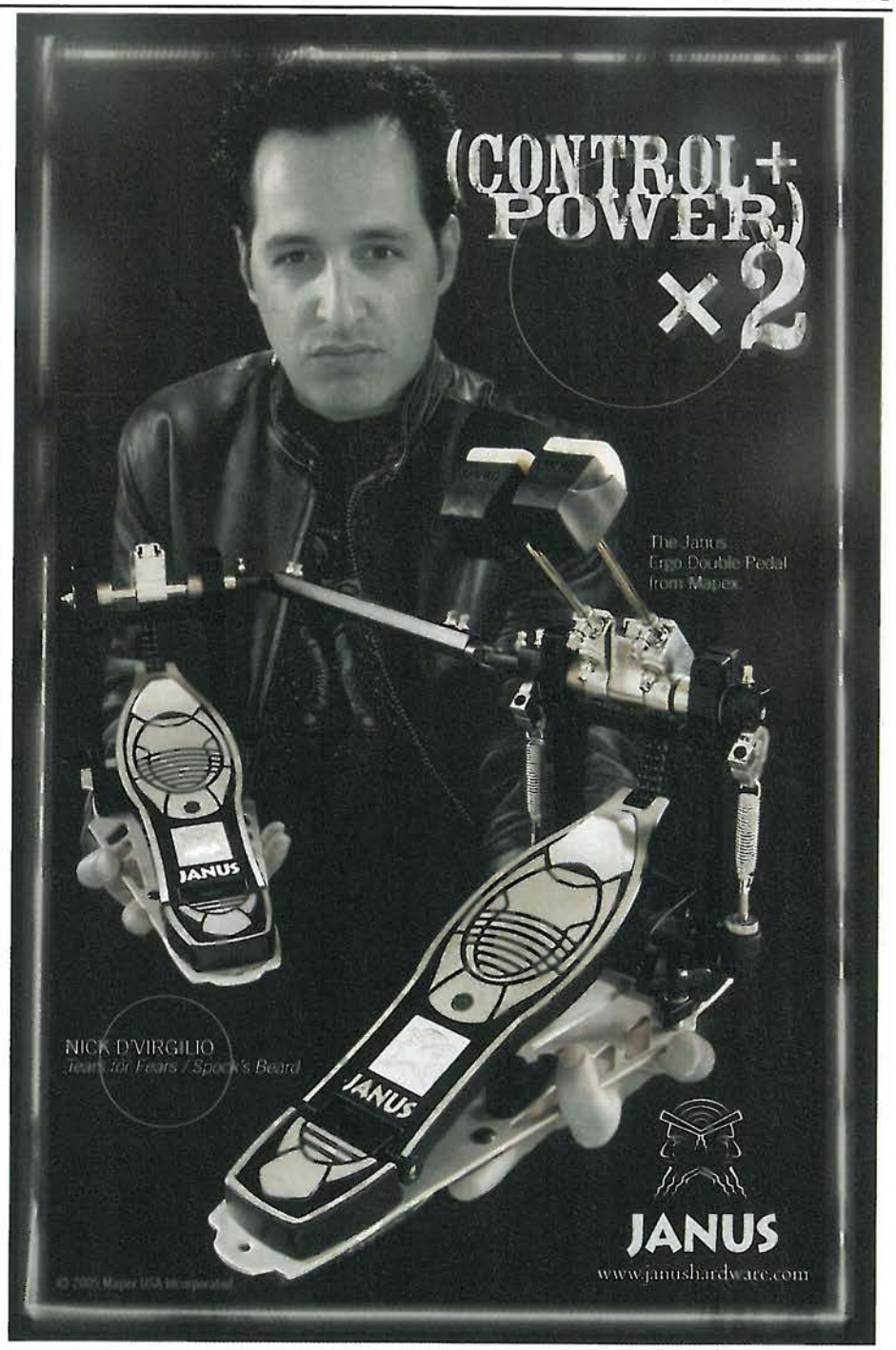
This Is Now

The following is a public service announcement: My fellow drummers, I am here to announce very good news! It's over. There are no more templates. The days of starving and waiting for that big record deal (gravy train) are over! There are no longer any big record deals. There are no big labels. That era of the music industry is over. Yep, put a fork in it. It's done.

I think history will show that the success of the record industry in the late twentieth century was just as much a temporary fluke as the riverboat and railroad industries. Technology moves on as time passes. But does it have to pass *us* by?

The future is unsecured, totally unknown. Pretty scary, huh? I think that from here on out, there will no longer be the "next big thing." I mean, there will always be the fluff that grabs the attention of the press, which is usually something that's been done already but is dressed up in some new way. But with the deterioration of the big labels and big radio, we've gone back to what has been the norm throughout the ages. Artists will have it rough, but they will somehow earn a living.

In some cases, artists can find a benefactor (like Mozart and his king). But there is no longer a "free ride" available to us, where a big label signs our band and gives us money, and we achieve fame through their marketing



departments. The big labels are gone. And radio no longer will break an artist. In fact, radio is like Wal-Mart now!

There is also one-tenth the amount of so-called studio session work that there was just ten years ago. I'm doing my sessions out of my own studio now, and so is almost everyone else I know. The entire infrastructure seems to have disintegrated.

Why This Is Good News

This means that each of us can choose what our music is to become. It can be influenced by South Indian traditional music just as much as by Shania Twain. Nirvana, meet the tango. To me, this is very freeing, and for those of you who are free spirits, it's your time to speak! I believe you each hold your future in your hands and heart. None of you *need* that expensive recording studio in LA or New York. (Heck, most of them are out of business anyway.)

With this new openness comes great responsibility. Every drummer reading this article should begin to learn how to design art for an album jacket and should know how to record a band in at least one digital format. We also have to learn how to market ourselves. There is greater pressure on each of us to be even *more* qualified to see each of our projects through to completion.

The bad news is that there is no art department and no marketing department to do all of that stuff for you. The good news is, for every CD you sell, you'll earn all of the money. We can now, each of us, make a movie or a record. The goal? To satisfy our soul. The other, more physical goal could be to sell a thousand copies, or maybe just five hundred. It's now guerilla warfare. Work from your own neighborhood out. Do your thing. You are free.

There is no template for success because there is no success as it was previously known. Your success will come from completing your own projects and from learning things, *not* from getting that lucky break or hearing about an audition.

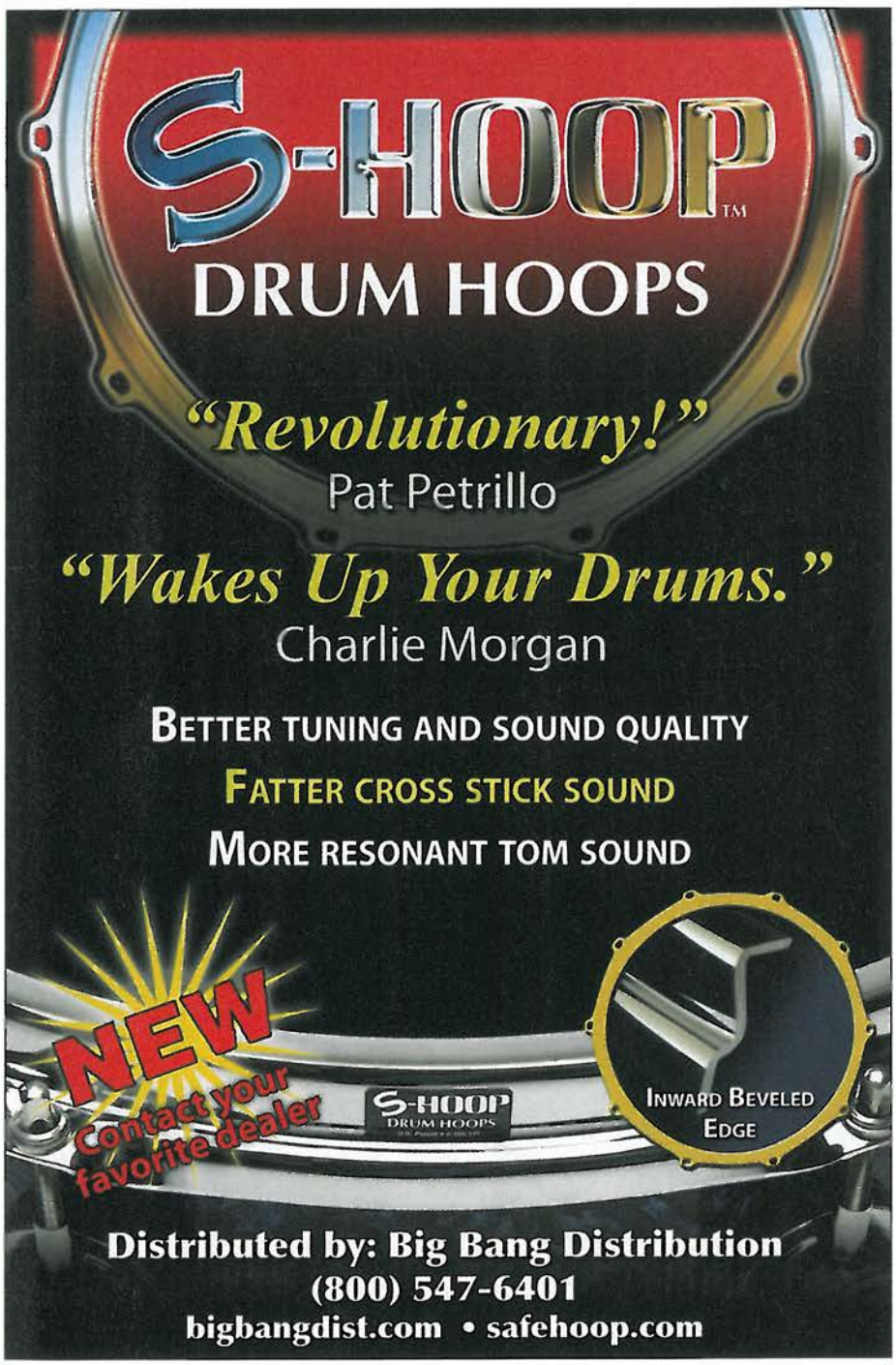
If I had a child entering college who was interested in music, I would encourage him or her to study it. But I think it's just as important for them to study something like filmmaking, computers, or even psychology. Any subject that demands abstract thought will work, because the tools that you'll need will be changing, but our musical-ness will always be intact. What counts the most is our fundamental knowledge: knowledge about history, about the history of the arts, and most of all, about ourselves—our *artistic* selves.

What Lies Ahead

I don't know what lies ahead, but I think in the not-so-distant future everyone will be making their own movies and records and writing their own books. I also believe it might become rare for a musician to make the proverbial million dollars. (There might be less money and less fame coming than what was possible in the past.) And this might motivate some people to try other, more lucrative pursuits. Good! The people who remain doing the music will be in it for their hearts. They'll be doing it to save their lives, not to make money.

Go do it now!

Billy Ward has worked with Carly Simon, Robbie Robertson, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, and Joan Osborne. His book, Inside Out: Exploring The Mental Aspects Of Drumming, *was recently released by Modern Drummer Publications. He also has a successful DVD out,* Big Time. *Billy can be reached at his Web site, www.billyward.com.*



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A Drummer's Glossary

As you flip through the pages of *MD* each month, you're likely to come across a word or two that you've never seen before, or one that's used in a unique or strange way. In order to clarify some of the jargon that's become the "drumming language," we've created the following glossary of drum-related terms.

Because new terms pop up all the time, we'll be updating and amending this list regularly. Check out our Web site, www.moderndrummer.com, for the most current collection.

Accent—To place emphasis on a specific note.

Ambience—The added sound contributed by the room in which music is being performed or recorded, characterized by quality (bright, warm, dark), quantity (live or dead), and length of decay (long or short).

Attack—The defining part of a sound that gives it articulation, occurring at the beginning of the note. With drums, the attack is due to the sound of the stick or beater against the head.

Backbeat— In pop music, it's the second and fourth beats of each measure.

Barline—Vertical lines that divide written music into measures.

Baseplate—Stabilizing plate for foot pedals.

Bass drum spurs—Spiked metal rods that keep the bass drum stationary.

Batter head—The head that is struck in order to play a drum.

Bead—The shaped striking end of a drumstick, also known as the *tip*.

Bearing edge—The edge of a drum's shell that connects with the film of the drumhead.

Boom stand—Cymbal stand with an extra arm that can be adjusted to extend vertically and horizontally.

Brilliant finish—a shiny cymbal finish that's a result of buffing or polishing.

Buzz roll—A standard drum rudiment used to sustain sound, consisting of multiple strokes containing at least three bounces per stroke. Also known as *closed roll*, *multiple bounce roll*, and *press roll*.

China cymbal—A distinct type of cymbal with an upturned perimeter, characterized by its trashy sound.

Choke—To quickly mute or silence an instrument's sound.

Chops—Slang term for a musician's playing technique.

Click track—An electronic device that marks exact time via a regular repeating click, tone, blip, or flashing light, often monitored through headphones. Also known as *metronome*.

Clutch—A device used to secure a top hi-hat cymbal to a pull rod.

Cocktail drum—A deep floor tom that is adapted to have snares strung under the top head and a foot pedal beneath the bottom head, in order to facilitate stand-up playing.

Concert tom-tom—A single-headed tom.

Cross-stick—1. Term often used to describe a rimclick or sidestick. See *rimclick*. 2. See *stick shot*.

Cross-sticking—Term used for moving from one drum to another with one hand crossing over the other.

Dampening—To muffle or mute the excessive overtones and ring from a drumhead, usually by applying some external material.

Die-cast—A thick and sturdy type of metal drum part (especially a rim) that's usually made by casting zinc alloy in a die mold.

Downbeat—Beat 1 of a measure.

Drop clutch—A specific type of hi-hat clutch that allows the top hi-hat cymbal to drop on to the lower cymbal by pressing a lever. Especially useful for double bass players.

Drumkey—A special thumb key that is used to tension drumheads.

Dry—1. (In live or recorded sound) Without any processing, especially without reverb or other ambient effects. 2. (In describing acoustic drum or cymbal sounds) With little or no sustain or "ring."

Duct tape—All-purpose tape designed originally for use in the heating and air-conditioning industries, often used to muffle drums.

Dynamics—The various degrees of volume.

EQ, Equalization—The amplification or reduction of selected frequencies.

Fermata—A prolongation of a musical note, chord, or rest beyond its given time value.

Fill (Fill-in)—A short ad-lib section in drumset music used to set up an ensemble section or as a transition between sections.

Flam—One of the standard rudiments, consisting of two strokes in which the first is a very quick grace note.

Flesh hoop—The hoop of a drumhead, to which the film is secured.

Floor tom—A large tom with three retractable legs.

French grip—A grip with the palm vertical and the thumb on top of the stick, producing a light tone.

Fulcrum—The connection point between the hand and the stick.

Gaffer's tape—Heavy-duty, all-purpose cloth tape that is used in the stage/entertainment industries, and often used to muffle drums.

Gating—The process of eliminating the quieter parts of a signal by shutting off the signal once the level falls below a certain decibel level. Sometimes used on drum mic's to eliminate bleed from other sound sources.

Gig (*n*)—A specific job for a musician, usually a performance. (*v*)—To work as a musician.

Gong drum—A single-headed bass drum with a shallow shell, usually mounted upright on a floor stand like an orchestral bass drum.

Independence—The ability to execute complex rhythms with one, two, or three limbs while maintaining a set pattern with the remaining limbs.

In-ear monitor—Wearable amplification devices designed to replace floor wedges with earphones.

Lathe (*v*)—The process of carving concentric grooves, or "tone rings," around the top and/or bottom surface of a cymbal. (*n*)—The tool used to carve the tone rings in the surface of a cymbal.

Loop—An audio recording (or part of a recording) that is played repeatedly.

Lug—Metal casings fitted to the drum shell to accept the lug bolts (tension rods).

Memory locks, memory clamps—Metal clamps attached to drum hardware to mark specific positions, decreasing set-up time.

Meter—The pattern of fixed beats by which a piece of music is measured.

Metronome—A mechanical or electronic device that marks exact time via a regular repeating click, tone, blip, or flashing light.

MIDI—Musical Instrument Digital Interface. The digital language that allows digital electronic devices of all types to work together.

Moeller stroke—Technique developed by Sanford Moeller to reduce tension by distributing the "load" of repetitive motions among several muscle groups, incorporating the arm, wrist, and fingers into one flowing action.

Muffle (*v*)—1. In classical percussion, an instruction to play with the snares off. 2. Also implies covering the drumhead with a

cloth or employing other muffling devices to dampen the head's vibrations. (*n*)—The device used to dampen the drumhead, such as muffling rings, Zero Rings, felt strips, Moon Gel, pillows, duct tape, and blankets.

Multi-clamp—A versatile multi-angled clamp that allows the mounting of add-on equipment to an existing hardware setup.

Mylar—Widely used name for the polyester film that synthetic drumheads are made of.

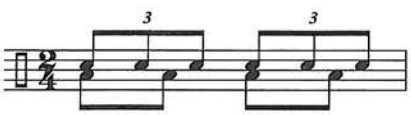
Offbeat—A rhythm that avoids the strong beats of the measure.

Overdub—To transfer recorded sound onto a previous recording, producing a combined effect.

Overtone—One of the higher tones produced simultaneously with the fundamental pitch, combining to create a complex musical tone.

Pan (-ning)—To place a sound in a certain location within the stereo field.

Paradiddle—One of the standard drum rudiments consisting of right- and left-hand stokes in a RLRR, LRLL pattern.

Polyrhythm—The simultaneous combination of contrasting rhythms.

Port—A hole cut in a front bass drum head that allows air to escape from inside the drum, and is often used for microphone placement.

Power toms—Toms with extra-deep shells.

Pull rod—The rod to which a top hi-hat cymbal is attached, and that is pulled downward when the hi-hat's pedal is depressed.

Rack, rack system—A central mounting device used to hold toms, cymbals, and other items of a drumkit. Usually consists of horizontal tubular or square section bars clamped to vertical leg posts.

Rack tom—Common name for smaller toms that are mounted on the bass drum or on a rack.

Reinforcement ring (or hoop)—Wooden rings around the inside edges of a drum, which reinforce the shell and also influence the sound.

Remote hi-hat—Hi-hat pedal with a cable connecting the pedal to the top section. Often used for a second pair of hi-hat cymbals on the right side of the drumset.

Resonance—The natural sound vibrations associated with a drumhead, drumshell, or cymbal.

Resonant head—the bottom head of a tom and the front head of a bass drum, which responds sympathetically when the batter head is struck.

Ride cymbal—A suspended cymbal (usually of large diameter) primarily used to play repeated rhythmic patterns.

Rim—A hoop of metal or wood that presses down on the flesh hoop and puts tension on a drumhead by stretching it over the shell.

Rimclick—A drum stroke in which the tip (or butt end) of the stick is held against the drumhead and the shoulder of the stick strikes the rim (often mistakenly called *cross-stick* or *rimshot*). Also known as *sidestick*.

Rimshot—A drum stroke in which a stick strikes the drumhead and the rim simultaneously, producing a loud, cutting sound.

Rivet—A flat-headed metal pin that is used in "rivet cymbals" to create a sizzle effect.

RotoToms—Single-headed tunable tom-toms, made by Remo, that are mounted on cast alloy frames with a central spindle that allows the tension in the head to be increased or decreased when the drum is rotated.

Rudiments—Fundamental drum strokes and patterns that are basic to all drum music and technique. Formally organized into a standard set of twenty-six by the National Association Of Rudimental Drummers in 1932.

Sample—A brief audio recording, often edited for multiple uses.

Sampler—A device used to store and play back specific audio recordings (samples).

Sidestick—See *rimclick*.

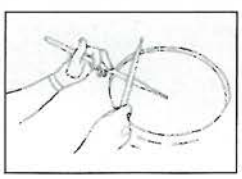
Sizzle cymbal—Cymbal with rivets, producing a "sizzling" sound.

Snare basket—the part of a snare drum stand that directly supports the drum, usually consisting of three fold-up arms.

Snare bed—The shallow indentations cut into the bottom bearing edge of a snare drum, allowing the snares to lie flat against the snare head.

Snares—The wires, gut, cable, or plastic cords tensioned beneath the bottom (and occasionally the top) head of a snare drum to give the drum its characteristic sound.

Sound module—A MIDI device that generates sounds.



Stick shot, stick-on-stick—A drum stroke in which one stick strikes the other while the struck stick is held with the tip against the drumhead.

Strainer—The device attached to the shell of a snare drum that adjusts the tension of the snares and engages and disengages them from the bottom head. Also known as *snare mechanism* or *throw-off*.

Suspension mount—A mounting system for toms or snare drums that maximizes the drum's resonance by isolating the shell from the mounting hardware.

Syncopation—A temporary displacement of the regular pulse typically caused by stressing the weak beat or its subdivisions.

Technique—The mechanical aspects of performing music.

Tempo—The rate of speed of a musical piece or passage, often indicated by an exact metronome marking.

Tension rods—The tuning keys of a drum. Also known as *key rods* or *tension screws*.

Throne—The drummer's seat.

Time signature—The unit of beats within a composition, indicated at the beginning of a written piece of music as a fraction.

Traps—Term used to describe the early drumkit and its multiple percussive effects and contraptions. Often associated with theater, vaudeville, and film percussion.

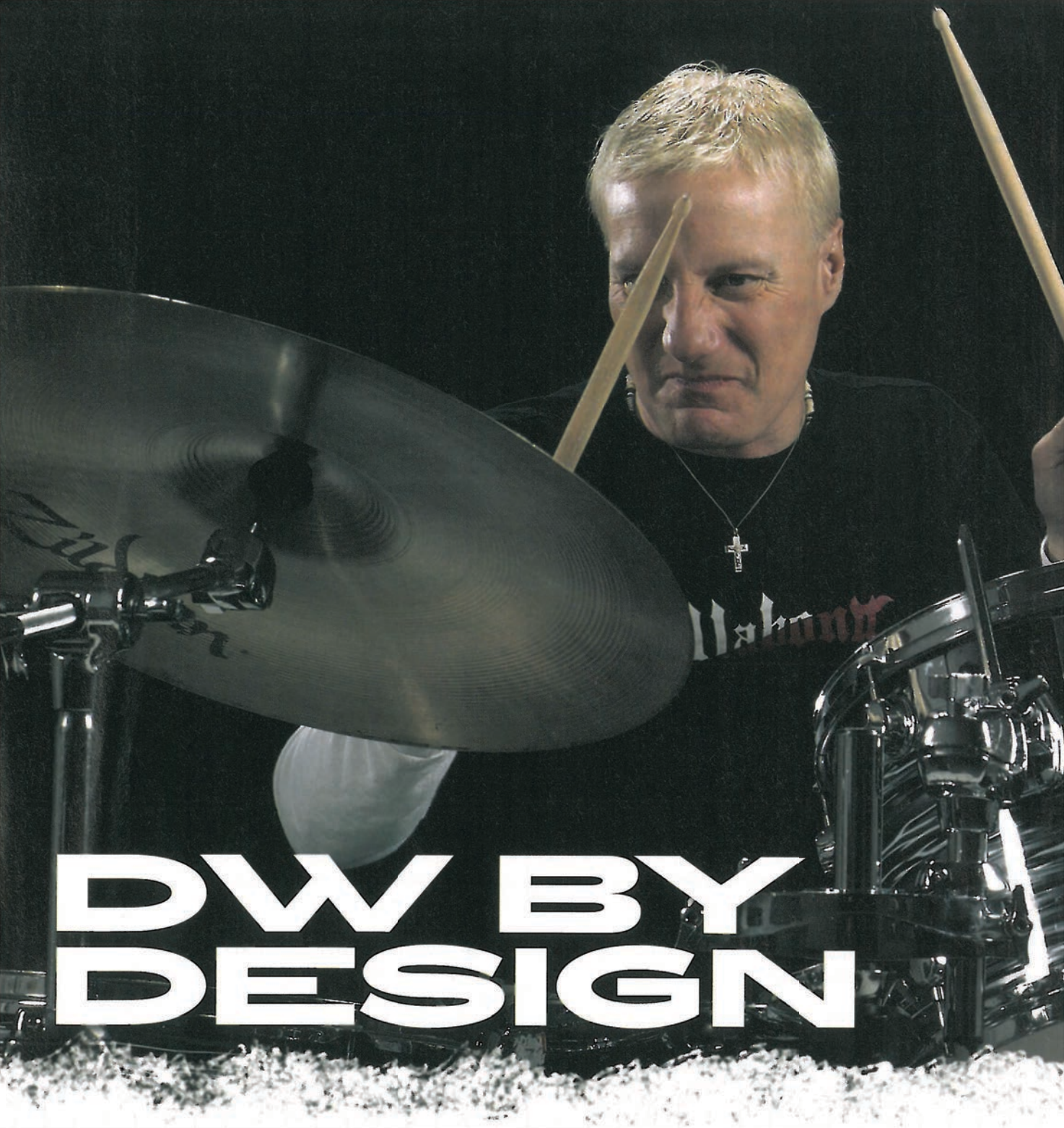
Trigger (*v*)—To initiate, actuate, or set off by a trigger. (*n*)—A small electronic device used to initiate an electronic sound, often connected to the drumhead, rim, or shell.

Triple-flanged rim—The rolled metal rim that's common on most drums, with a contoured shape designed to increase strength, allow the tension bolts to pass through, and minimize stick wear.

Upbeat—An unaccented beat in a musical measure, typically used to describe the "and" of the beat or the last beat of the measure.

Wet—A processed signal, especially one with reverb applied to it.

X-hat—Holder for an extra pair of hi-hat cymbals without a foot pedal.



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Copyright Questions And Answers

Getting Money, Getting Credit

by Marc Dicciani

Part of my role as director of the school of music at the University Of The Arts is to teach music business classes. The subject of copyrights is a major element of those classes.

Students in my classes (and also musicians I meet at clinics, lectures, and out in the workplace) frequently ask me what a copyright actually *is*. Who owns and controls it? And who is entitled to earn income from recordings, performances, and arrangements of songs?

I get two questions specifically from drummers: "Why are the rhythms and fills that I create not considered part of the composition of a song that can be copyrighted?" and "When my band creates original songs, we all contribute parts. But I'm told that since I didn't write the words or the melody, I'm not entitled to any money from the song. How can this be?"

Drummers (along with other instrumentalists, and even singers) are often shocked when they read songwriting credits on a CD and discover that their name isn't included. That upset is heightened when they realize that they're not going to be receiving any money from the mechanical licenses of the songs when the CDs sell, or from the performance revenue when the songs are played on the radio or TV.

To better help you understand the ins and outs of copyrights, this article will examine what can be copyrighted, who is entitled to income from a copyrighted song, and what you can do to protect yourself and/or earn compensation for your contribution. As we begin, remember that copyright law is complex, and many facets can be confusing. You should supplement what you learn from this article with your own research. (More about that later.)

Defining Terms

A copyright is a form of ownership of certain kinds of creative works (also called intellectual property), including songs. It's usually given to the individuals who created those works. In short, it is the control of the exclusive right to make copies of a song, and, effectively, to make money from that song. The purpose of copyright law is not just to protect the authors of these works, but also to balance their rights with those of the general public.

Rights of the public, you ask? Yes! Once a work is made available to the public (through a recording, for example), ordinary citizens have certain rights to listen to, perform, and even record that music. However, they usually must pay fees to the copyright owners when a song is recorded and sold, and when it is performed. That's the balance that the law aims to provide.

What Is And Isn't Covered

Generally, songs contain lyrics, melody, harmony, and rhythm. Federal statutes most often afford protection to the two most widely identified of these components: melody and lyrics. Copyright attorneys say that there are good reasons for this. Melody and lyrics are the only parts of a song that survive over time, remaining consistent through a variety of performances and recordings in many different styles and genres. Also, those two parts constitute a completely performable unit by a single individual. That is, one person can sing the words and melody with no accompaniment. (Or, in the case of an instrumental version, one person can play the song on a solo melodic instrument.)

The same defense cannot be made as strongly for harmony and rhythm within a song. No matter how recognizable those components may become, they are still considered accompaniment. They're part of the arrangement, not part of the

fundamental song. The song can easily be—and often is—performed or re-recorded with completely different accompaniment in a different style or interpretation.

The Issue Of Originality

In order for any of a song's components to be protected by copyright, they must be "sufficiently original." That's a very important legal phrase.

Harmony, rhythm, and accompaniment can sometimes be given copyright protection, but in most cases those elements don't meet the minimum criteria of being sufficiently original. This, unfortunately, often includes what the drummer plays. The drum part may be creative, have a great feel, and contribute to the song in a meaningful way. But it's probably *not* sufficiently original to meet legal copyright requirements.

Before you get upset, let me explain why this is a good thing.

There's A Reason

As a drummer, you may feel that what you're playing is *very* original. And sometimes it may genuinely be. But most times, a drum part is not original *enough* to claim copyright in it. After all, most of us learn by listening to our favorite drummers, and we often incorporate what we've learned from them into our own playing style.

When a person is said to own, or control, the copyright to something, that means that no one else can use it—in any context, for any reason—without the owner's permission. If every drum part to every song was protected by copyright, you couldn't ever play grooves or fills originated by Bonham, Gadd, Tony Williams, or Ringo without being legally required to pay those artists. Furthermore, since those grooves and fills were copyrighted as parts of specific songs, you'd have to play them exactly as they were recorded, *every* time you performed those songs. Also, you couldn't use them as a part of any other song or performance.

What this would mean, in all likelihood, is that every time you played or recorded any drum part on any song,

Read All About It

Here are some resources to help you learn more about copyrights.

Books

Music Copyright For The New Millennium
by David Moser (Pro Music Press)

All You Need To Know About The Music Business
by Donald Passman (Simon & Schuster)

The Musician's Business And Legal Guide
by Mark Halloran (Prentice Hall)

Music Business Handbook And Career Guide
by David Baskerville (Sage)

Web Sites

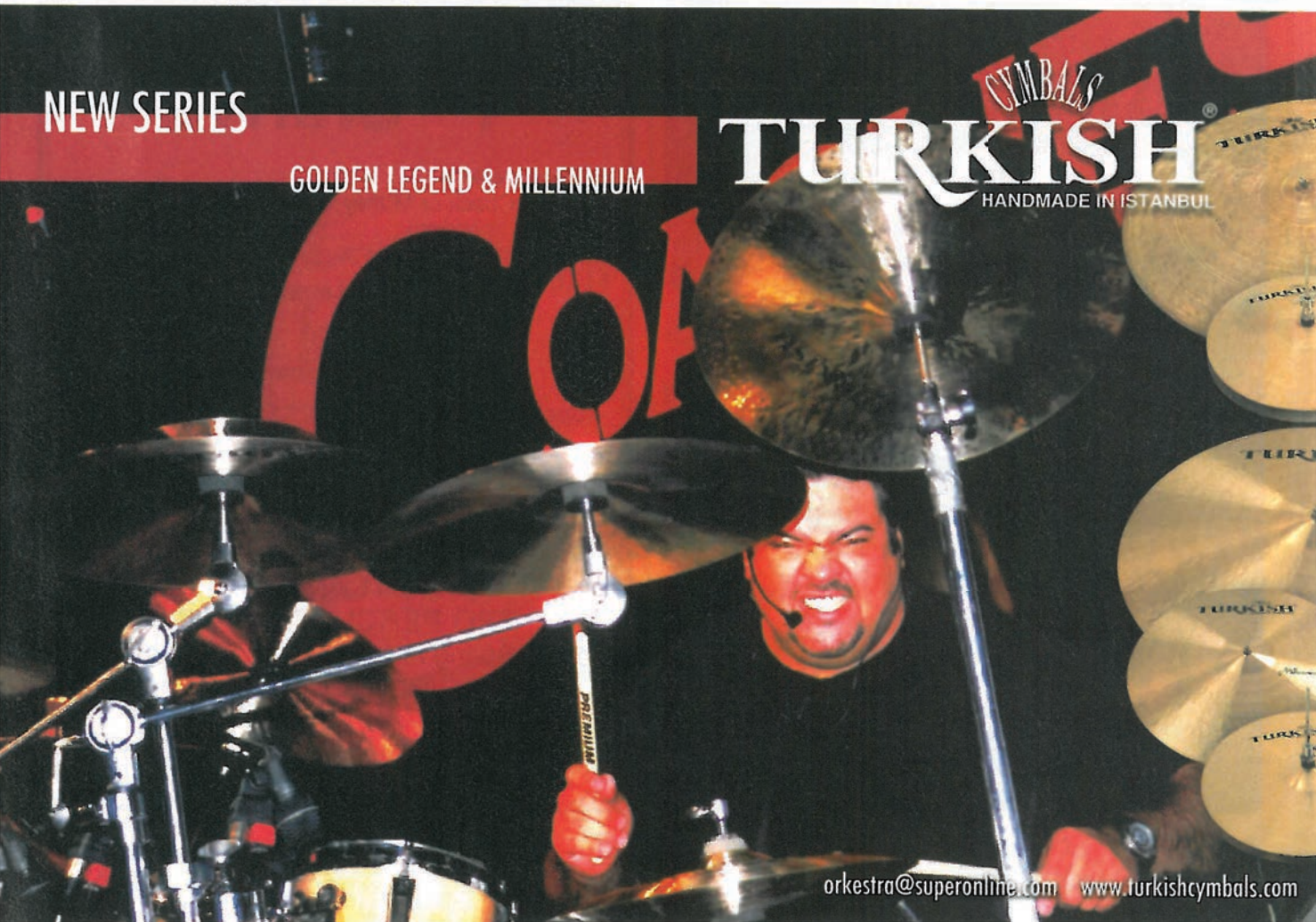
www.copyright.gov: US Copyright Office

www.sunsite3.berkeley.edu/copyright/: copyright, intellectual property rights, and licensing issues

www.whatsthedownload.com: Downloading issues

Business Courses

Music-business courses are available at many colleges and universities. Many offer night or weekend programs.



someone would probably sue you for copyright infringement. The bottom line is, giving copyright protection to drum parts would effectively prohibit the authorship of new songs, because no drummer can create a totally original drum part every time he or she plays.

All Is Not Lost

Even though drum parts may not be copyrightable, drummers can still earn credit and income from their contribution to a song. Let's say you're in an original band, and during rehearsals all of the bandmembers contribute to the writing of a new song. The bass player comes up with a bass line, the keyboard player picks out some chord changes, and you play a drum groove and add some other rhythmic accompaniment. Then, the lead singer and the guitarist start working with a lyrical idea, and they begin to construct a melody that is probably based on—or at least influenced by—what the rhythm section is playing.

As someone who has added ideas and musicality to this song, are you not entitled to some credit and money? Yes, you are—as long as all of the bandmembers agree.

If your band creates original material as a group—especially on a "jam" basis at rehearsals—it's a good idea to have a written agreement ahead of time regarding if and how you will share the credit and the profit from the songs. You should also agree on who controls the copyright and the licenses of the songs.

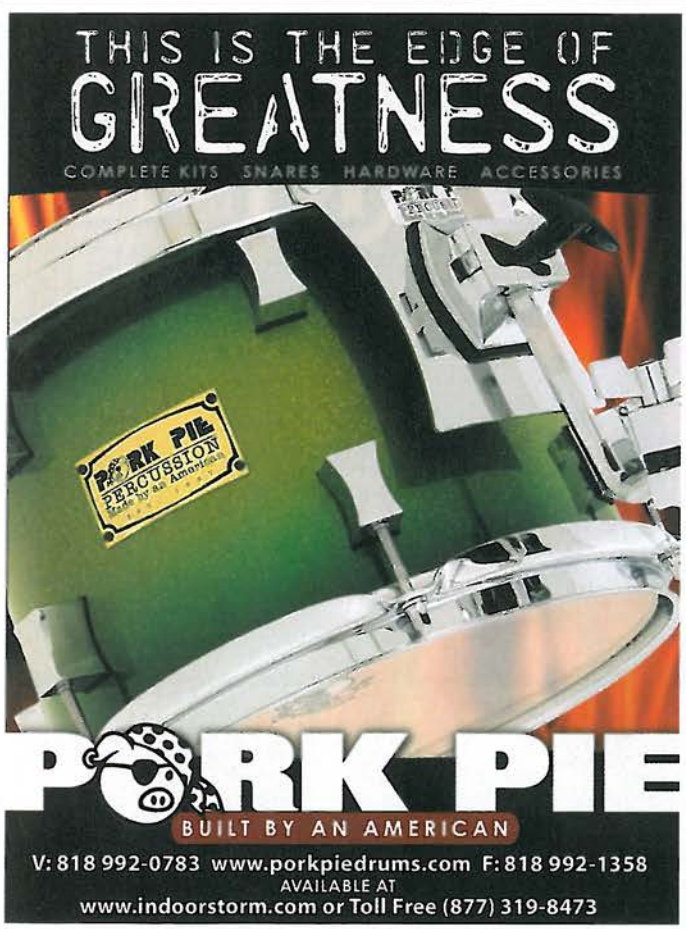
There is no one formula for such an agreement; it really depends on many different factors. Accordingly, I suggest that you hire someone to help lead the bandmembers through such a discussion. This could be a friend, an attorney, or anyone who knows enough about copyrights and publishing to clearly explain the issues and help the group create an agreement that they can all live with. This is especially important if the band, or the songs, become successful. As you may already know, success often breeds more problems than failure does.

There's More To Know

Copyright law and shared credits are among the most difficult aspects of the music business to understand. The statutes are always open to interpretation, and attorneys battle over these issues every day. Although it's not necessary for every musician to become an expert in copyright law, there are certain things that we all should be aware of when it comes to knowing what rights we have, protecting those rights, and avoiding infringing on the rights of others.

There are a few very good, easy-to-read books on the subject of copyright law, several of which are listed in the sidebar to this article. In addition, many courses are available at local colleges and universities. Do a little homework, and you'll be much better prepared to receive your fair share of compensation for your musical efforts.

Marc Dicciani is the director of The School Of Music at The University Of The Arts in Philadelphia, where he teaches drumset and courses in music business. As an artist, he records and tours with guitarist Jimmy Bruno, and he has performed with Diane Schuur, Clark Terry, Joe Beck, Christian McBride, Doc Severinsen, Snooky Young, James Moody, Ray Parker Jr., and Lee Ritenour. Marc is also an artist/clinician for Yamaha, Sabian, Regal Tip, and Remo.



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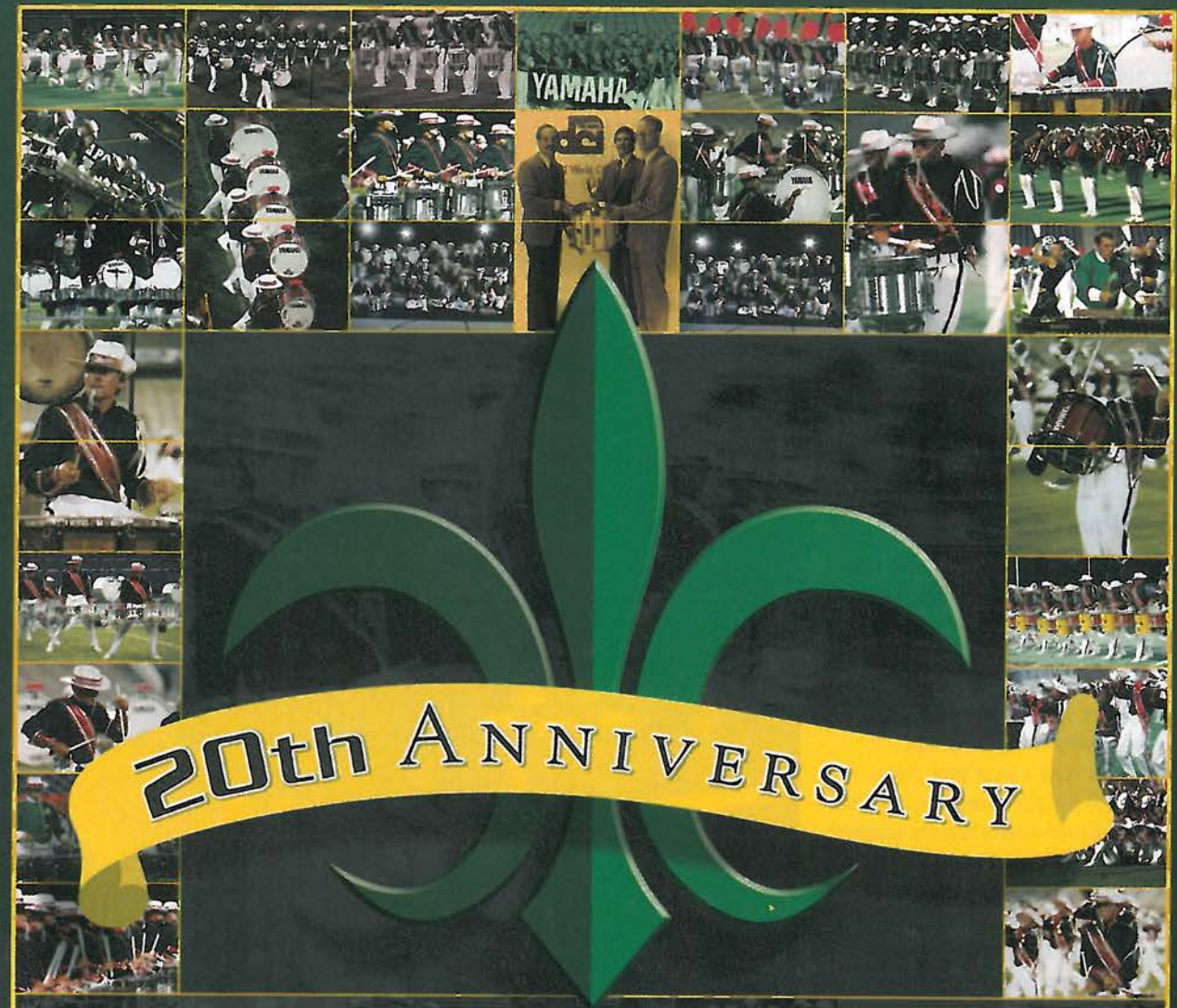

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Todd Sucherman's Drum Cabana

by Mark Parsons

Sherman Oaks is the lovely Los Angeles suburb where Styx drummer Todd Sucherman (rhymes with "booker-man") makes his home. When Todd and his wife were house-hunting in the area, they chose their house partly because it had a detached garage in the back yard, which would lend itself nicely to being converted into a drum room.

Todd then spent quite a bit of time, money, and effort making sure the 225-square-foot room was highly soundproofed with Auralex Acoustic treatment before he moved in all his equipment. In fact, we cover the construction of this room as one of the "case studies" in the upcoming *MD* book *Keep The Peace: The Musician's Guide To Soundproofing.* Suffice it to say that this room is almost a textbook case of how to soundproof an existing residential structure.

Todd relates the story: "The first musical rehearsal for the new room took place when bassist Marco Mendoza and guitarist Steve Fister came by for a rehearsal for a charity event we were doing at LAMA. It was jet-engine volume in the room, but outside all you could hear was the sound of birds singing. There were no complaints from the neighbors then, or ever. I can really focus and enjoy myself, knowing I'm not a bother to anyone."

So how does Todd use his drum cabana, as he calls it? As both a retreat from the rigors of road life *and* as a practice/rehearsal studio, that's how. Todd plays well over a hundred shows a year with Styx, and his wife, Taylor Mills, tours with Brian Wilson as a singer.

Is it hard getting back into playing when you're fresh off a long tour? "That's where the magic of drums takes over," says Todd. "You can't help but want to play, being surrounded by these beautiful, sacred instruments. I remember my father taking me to Franks Drum Shop in Chicago when I was a kid. There was something magical about those old shops, with the drums stacked all around you. I suppose I wanted to create that sort of feeling with my drum room."

Alex Solca

Taylor Mills

Well, he's certainly done a good job of it. The contents of Todd's drum room would give any drummer that "kid in a candy shop" feeling. Currently there are ten kits in the room, mostly stacked up, except for the two or three in use. Among the sets that fill the space: various vintage rosewood and bubinga Sonor kits, a ddrum 3 rig, a DW Timeless Timber kit that Deen Castronovo gave Todd after a Journey/Styx tour, and Todd's father's '69 Slingerland jazz kit. The only drums that see any action live or in the studio, Todd adds, are the Pearl Masterworks and Masters kits.

"I'm fiercely loyal in that regard," the drummer says. "When Styx recorded the studio album *Cyclorama*, I had my Masterworks road kit trucked across the country, because that's what I wanted to use. It would have been cheaper and easier to call a drum cartage company and have them arrive with

their gear. But I'm just not comfortable doing that."

Todd describes the Pearl kits that reside in the cabana: "The Masterworks bubinga set is almost the same rig as the one I use with Styx; one is on the road and one stays home. The home rig has a third bass drum as well as Quarter Toms to the left. Visually and sonically, they're stunning.

"More often than not," Todd continues, "there are three kits set up. But currently there are two, because I've been busy while I've been home, so the load in and out is easier with just two set up. It's nice to float from kit to kit, because the instruments will inspire different ideas. There's a *world* of difference between a triple bass kit and a four-piece jazz kit with an 18" bass drum."

Additionally, there's a large selection of cymbals from Sabian, with whom Todd has had a long relationship. Beyond that, there are various percussion items lying around—shakers, tambourines, talking drums, doumbeks, darboukas.... "It's great when I have a few drum pals over and we can get some interesting things happening," Todd shares.

Something that's hard to miss in Todd's studio is the "wall o' snares." A custom-built wood display case holds twenty drums, while others are stacked on top or residing with the set-up kits. There are more than thirty snares in the cabana, including drums from Sonor, Ludwig, Leedy, Rogers, Ayotte, Stanbridge, C&C, Joyous Lake, NSMD, Bearing Edge, Noble & Cooley, Drum Solo, Exotic, Dunnett, Trick, and, of course, Pearl.

"Each of the drums I've collected appeals to me on some emotional level," Todd explains. "It's a meager collection compared to a lot of guys', but these particular instruments all make me feel like I'm a kid again. My father used to say, 'Use the drums to make money, don't spend all your money *on* drums!'" Todd grins. "Well, I suppose you have to find a balance."

Audix Microphones

Made With Drummers In Mind

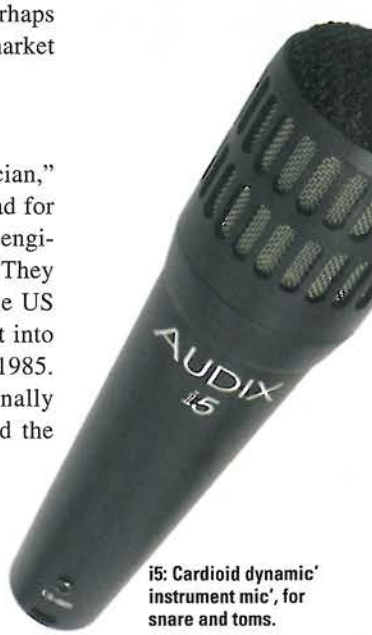
by Mark Parsons

Wilsonville, Oregon, is a clean and green little city of approximately 15,000 that sits on "The I-5," as Left-Coast residents universally call the main thoroughfare that stretches from Canada to Mexico. Located within a few hundred yards of the interstate is a manufacturer that has gone from "interesting little company" to "big player" status in what seems like a very short time—although in reality they've been working hard at their craft for two decades.

The story of Audix today is essentially the story of Cliff Castle and Fred Bigeh. Cliff is vice president of sales & marketing, and Fred is director of product design & manufacturing. Between the two of them, they have perhaps the perfect combination of skills necessary to design, manufacture, and market technical products to an entertainment-driven industry.

History

"I went into college on an athletic scholarship and came out a musician," Cliff Castle says with a laugh. After leaving school, Cliff went on the road for ten years as a bass player. Then he met Fred Bigeh, who had a broadcast engineering education and a serious penchant for acoustics and electronics. They decided to go into business together, and initially they were the exclusive US distributors for Audix Japan. The first "pro-quality" product they brought into this country was the OM-1 dynamic vocal mic', which was introduced in 1985. This was soon followed by the OM-2. Both of these mic's were originally developed and built in Japan. A few years later, Cliff and Fred acquired the



i5: Cardioid dynamic' instrument mic', for snare and toms.

AN AUDIX ARRAY

Here's a look at a select list of Audix mic's and accessories that have drumset applications.

D1: Hypercardioid dynamic, for snare, bongos, and similar drums. Features a slight midrange boost.

D2: Hypercardioid dynamic, for toms, congas, and similar drums. Features a slight mid-bass boost.

D4: Hypercardioid dynamic, for floor toms and kick drums. Features an extended low-end response.

D6: Large cardioid dynamic for kick drums. Features a massive low-end response with enhanced attack characteristics.

Fusion-Series drum packs: Drum packs featuring Audix's value-priced Fusion mic's. (Shown: the Fusion 6 drum pack.)

DP-Series: Drum packs featuring Audix's pro drum mic's. (Shown: the DP Elite.)

F12: Value-priced cardioid dynamic' mic' for kick and floor toms.

F10: Value-priced cardioid dynamic' mic' for snare and toms.

ADX-51: Pre-polarized cardioid small-diaphragm condenser, for overheads, hi-hats, and cymbals.

F15: Value-priced cardioid pre-polarized condenser, for overheads, cymbals, and hi-hats.

SCX-25A: Large-diaphragm cardioid condenser with integral capsule suspension and small body footprint. For drum overheads and room mic's.

SCX-One: Small-diaphragm condenser (available in cardioid, hypercardioid, and omni versions). For overheads, hi-hats, and cymbals.

D-Flex: Drum mic' universal mount.

D-Vice: Drum mic' mount made to mount onto drum rims.

Micro-D: Miniature pre-polarized hypercardioid condenser clip-on mic' for snare and toms, with integrated D-Vice rim mount. (Cardioid version also available.)

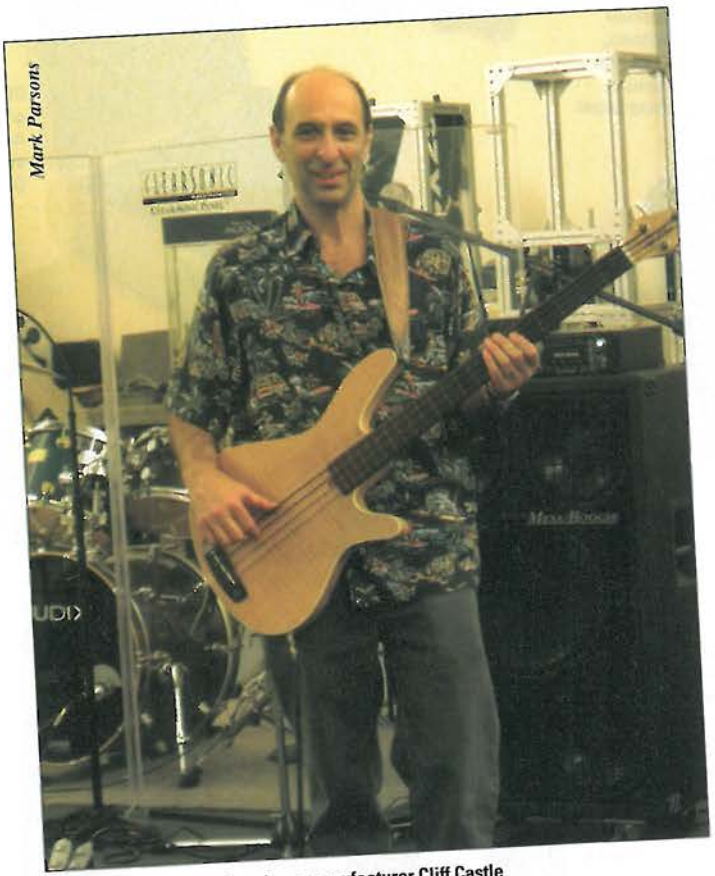
D-Clamp: Drum mic' mount can attach to congas and similar drums.

rights to the company name, and they started designing and manufacturing microphones in California's Bay Area.

"It was more difficult than we thought it would be," Cliff says. "We put all of our profits back into developing the company, because if you don't have a solid product with R&D behind it, then you won't make it in the long haul. We weren't driving nice cars back then, that's for sure."

One of the payoffs of this "take the long view" approach was the development of VLM (Very Low Mass) technology. Some of the aspects are proprietary, but the gist is that by lowering the mass of the moving parts of a dynamic' microphone you can get a condenser-like response from it, yet still have the ruggedness and low-end beef of a good dynamic.

In 1991, Cliff and Fred moved Audix operations to the current location near Portland, Oregon. There, they set about developing more models in the OM series, as well as other types of mic's. With the advent of the OM-3 and OM-5, things started to gather momentum. Portland is only a couple of hours away from Seattle, and when the Northwest music scene took off, many of the artists realized that there was a local company making world-class microphones.



Bass player-turned-microphone manufacturer Cliff Castle

Out Into The World

"On one of my trips to LA in the early '90s," Cliff Castle recalls, "I met with Dave Rat, who owns Rat Sound—one of the large touring sound companies. He was working with many of the big Seattle bands, as well as with The Red Hot Chili Peppers. We let him try our newest mic' at the time—the OM-7—and he flipped. After extensive testing with his monitor rig, he found that it outperformed his other stage mic's in terms of sound quality and gain-before-feedback. He started using our mic's for lead vocals with all these groups."

Cliff grins, adding, "We knew we were getting somewhere when the cover of *Time* magazine in October of '93 was a shot of Eddie Vedder singing into an Audix mic'!"

By the mid-'90s, Audix was firmly established as a manufacturer, with the ability to design and build prototypes quickly. This allowed them to experiment with application-specific microphones, which led to the debut of the D series. This was perhaps the first time any manufacturer had come out with an entire line of microphones designed from the beginning as drum-specific mic's. (More about them later.) At the same time, Audix also developed several large- and small-diaphragm condenser microphones, as well as their highly successful Micro-series.

Design And Prototypes

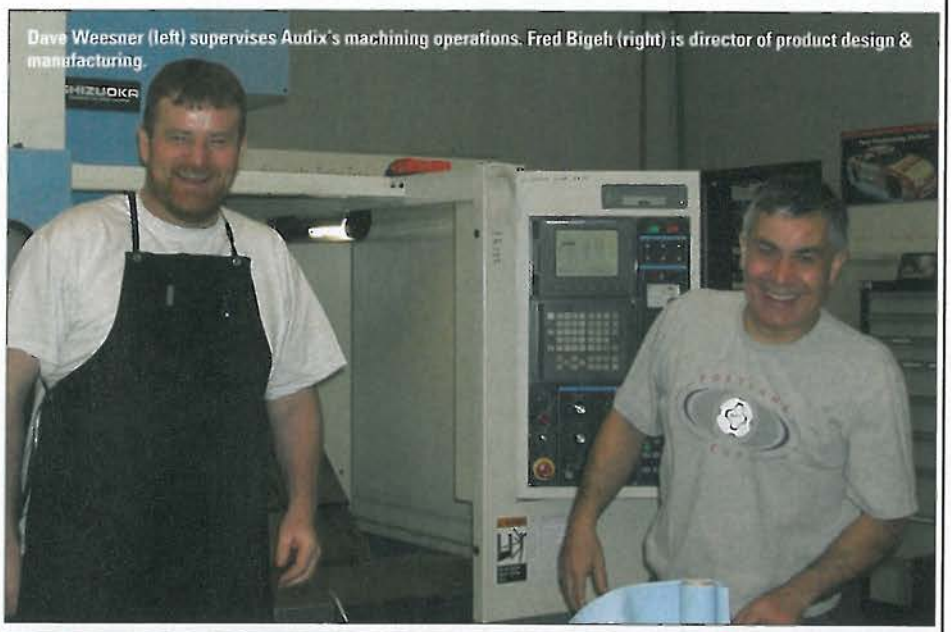
As we started our tour of the Audix production facility, they were in the process of turning out a batch of D6 bodies. One of the production rooms contained a pallet of raw 2" aluminum bar stock on one side, and hundreds of gleaming new D-6 bodies on the other. The interesting thing is what happens in between.

Dave Weesner, Audix's director of machinery, works on the physical design of a microphone, from the initial computer drafting to the production process. As Dave walked us through the design and manufacturing process, it was apparent that the employee philosophy at Audix is "total involvement." Many of their technicians are cross-trained in several aspects of production, which gives them a real sense of involvement with the products they're making.

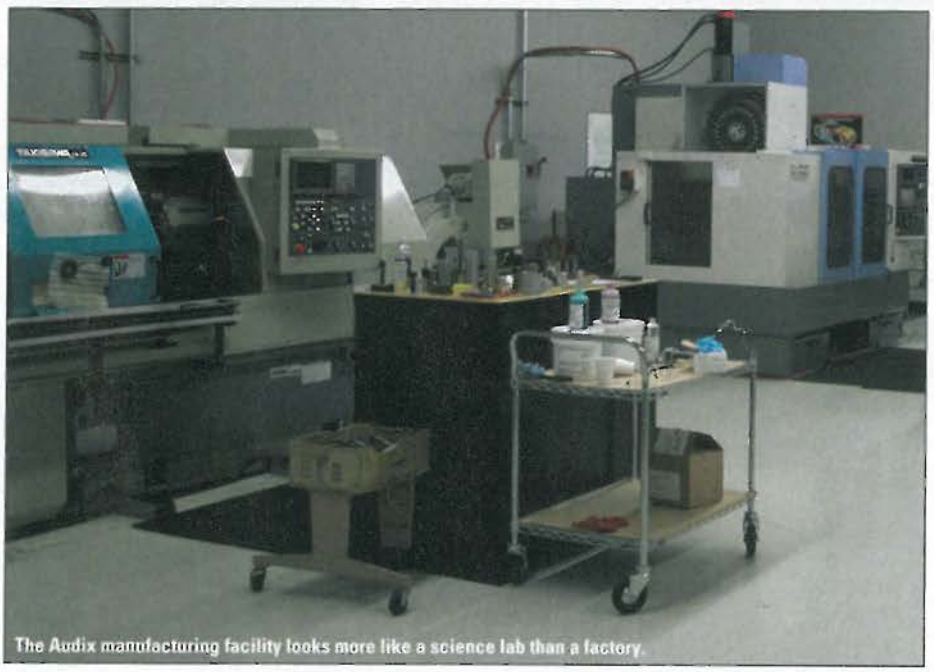
The design process begins with a drawing. Says Dave, "It could be anything from a quick sketch to a fairly elaborate drawing. Usually there are several variations for any given microphone idea. One of the nice things about having our entire process in-house is that we can turn concepts into prototypes right away. So when we have an idea—or several variations on an idea—we can build them all."

But before machine meets metal to make a microphone, Dave has to tell the machines what to do. First he creates a detailed computer drawing of the mic' body, and then he uses some elaborate software to turn the drawing into a set of instructions for the CNC (computer numerical controlled) machines that actually make the mic' bodies. Once this is done, the prototype process can continue.

Once Audix has created several different prototypes, how do they decide which version ultimately makes it to the production line? By a process known as beta testing. The mic's go out to various engineers and artists who use them and report back with their opinions. As an example, the D6 was tested by the sound engineers for bands such as Blink-182, Pearl Jam, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Galactic, and



Dave Weesner (left) supervises Audix's machining operations. Fred Bigeh (right) is director of product design & manufacturing.



The Audix manufacturing facility looks more like a science lab than a factory.

of choice for several of those test groups.

After the mic's are put through the wringer by the beta testers, they go into production. That's where we came in, watching bars of solid aluminum being turned into D6 bodies. And how does this happen? Mostly through the magic of CNC.

Manufacturing

On a standard lathe, the part being worked on rotates, while the machining tools remain stationary. On a standard milling machine, the part is fixed and the makes Audix D6 bodies, both the part *and* the tools rotate, with movement possible in all directions. There are sixty tools housed inside, which the machine can change automatically in order to drill, cut, grind, mill, and shave all in one complex operation. This allows the machine to turn out a completed D6 body every few minutes.

Audix considered outsourcing the production of this mic' body to a precision machine shop. But the cost of just the body alone would be higher than the current dealer cost of the complete microphone.

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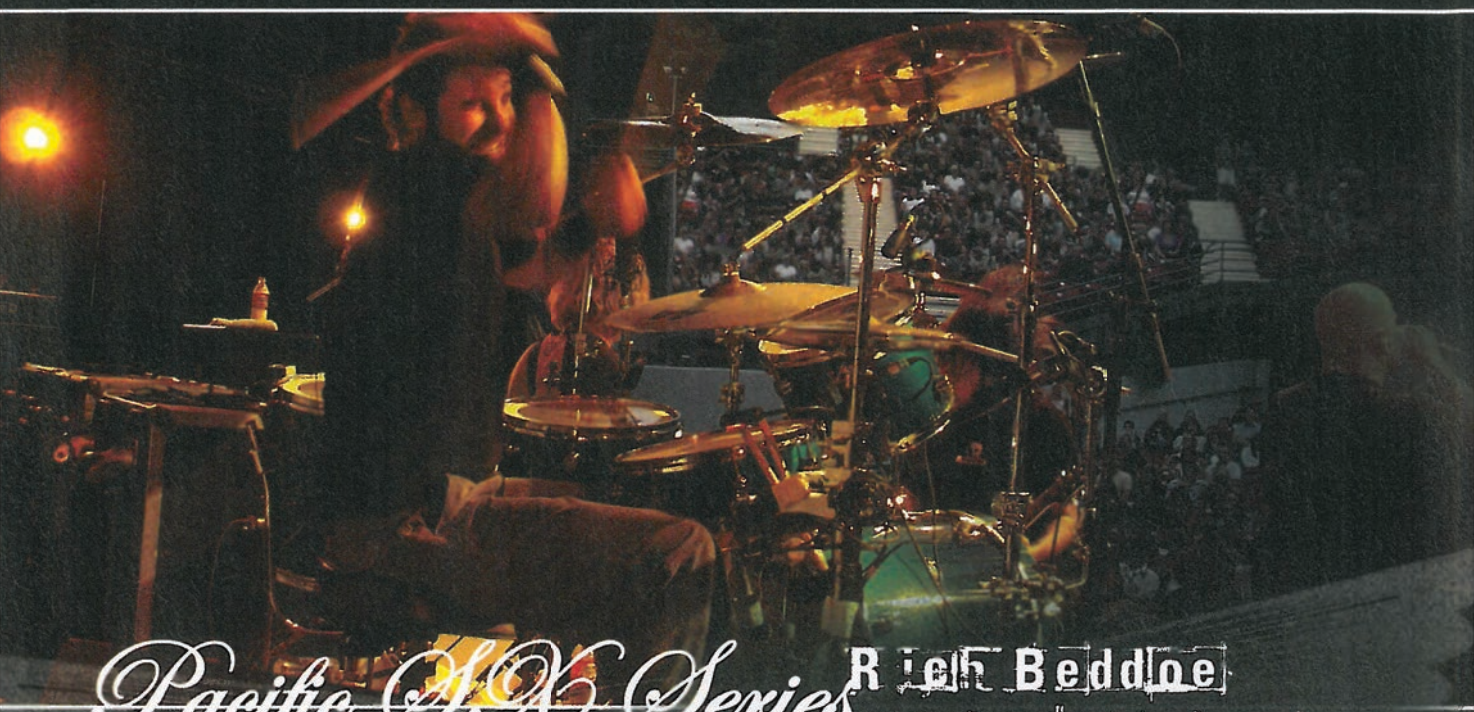

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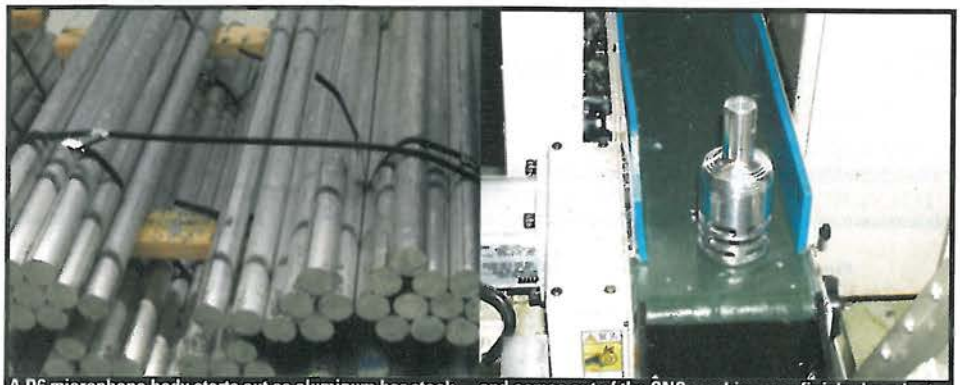
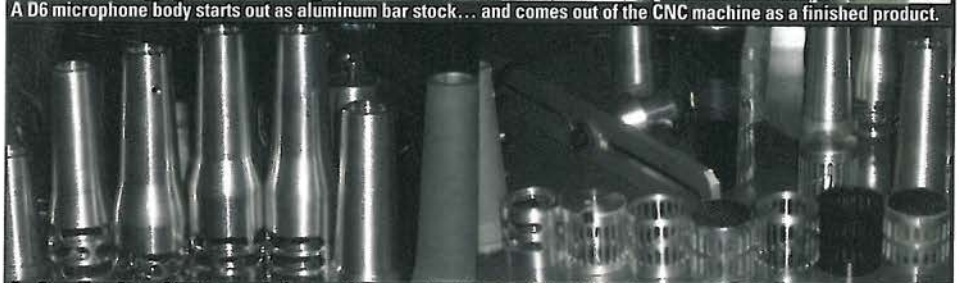
Audix



A D6 microphone body starts out as aluminum bar stock... and comes out of the CNC machine as a finished product.



Audix makes lots of prototypes before settling on a final design. All of these i5 prototypes led to the finished version shown in the product sidebar.

Electronic QC

Marc Wilson handles quality control for Audix, which involves electronic testing of finished products. Every microphone is checked before being etched with its brand and model information and then shipped. The test consists of a comparison analysis, in which the finished mic' is compared to a known reference, and the resulting frequency response is analyzed on a computer screen. The product being tested must be within very close tolerances of the reference in order to pass this stage.

There is also a similar test for phase, as well as a vocal test (primarily to check the mic's proximity and polar pattern). Additionally, Audix has developed an automated station where microphones can be tested and then laser-engraved, all by robot. From there, the mic's are packed and shipped.

What's Inside?

All of the above explains the design and production of the physical product. But what about the internals, and most importantly, the *sound*? For that, we met with the other leading light of Audix, Fred Bigeh. You might expect the director of product design & manufacturing at a major mic' manufacturer to be a "suit & tie" guy behind a desk. Fred is wearing jeans, a T-shirt, and running shoes. (Both he and Cliff Castle are runners.)

Considering the way Fred conducts his business, those running shoes are a practical choice. During our visit he was bouncing around the facility from department to department, checking on things and "talking tech" with the staff. From listening to him discuss acoustics and microphones, it's clear that this is a man who spends a large part of his waking hours thinking about new mic' designs and better ways to manufacture them.

Fred led us on a whirlwind tour of the steps involved in creating a mic' capsule from scratch. We looked at coil winders, magnetizers, and some very high-tech robotic machinery (of Audix's proprietary design) that can assemble a capsule with extreme precision and minimal added mass. To ensure that every step along the way is optimized, Audix employs measuring equipment usually found only in laboratories. They also have an anechoic chamber (a completely non-reverberant room) where they perform detailed acoustic tests on their new designs.

Before a product goes out into the field for beta testing, it gets a thorough workout in Audix's 5,000-sq. ft. sound room.

I'm all glitter and rainbows.

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Audix

Imagine a complete recording studio that's set up in a room the size of a large club, and that also features a full-size stage complete with drumkit, mic's, monitors, instruments, amps, and a professional PA system.

Products

When it comes to microphones, Audix pretty much covers the field, both on stage and in the studio. They offer vocal and instrument mic's, in dynamic and condenser versions. Of special interest to drummers is the fact that over half of the mic's in Audix's lineup are either drum-specific or have drumset applications.

The drum-related lines include the D series (five professional dynamics designed for drums), the i5 dynamic instrument mic', the SCX-1 and SCX-25 small and large professional condensers, the Micro-D clip-on condensers for drums, the Fusion Series (value-priced drum mic's), the ADX-51 (electret small-diaphragm condenser), and the CX-111 (large-diaphragm studio condenser). (See the sidebar for details on these mic's.)

Marc Wilson is in charge of the sophisticated electronic testing given to finished products.

Additionally, Audix offers half a dozen "drum packs" featuring their D series pro mic's and their Fusion series affordable mic's. Also available are three innovative drum-specific mic' mounting systems: the D-Vice, D-Clamp, and D-Flex mounts.

Future Plans

So, what's new from Audix, and what's coming up around the bend? "For drummers," replies Cliff Castle, "we recently released the i5, and we've been getting very good feedback on it. And we're reformatting our drum packs to give drummers better options when it comes to buying one set of mic's for the entire drumset. We've also made some modifications to our SCX-25, which is a great overhead mic'. The updated SCX-25A is just now starting to ship."

Audix has also just released the CX-112, an updated version of their large studio condenser, and they've got some new miniature mic's in the works. And although they don't want to say too much just yet, keep your eyes open for some very high-end condenser products from them in the not-too-distant future.

"We're always pushing the envelope," says Cliff, smiling. "We love creating new designs and making new products. Fred and I are constantly on the lookout for a new challenge."

Audix mic's are put to practical tests on the company's sound stage.

I'm red with heavy duty hardware.

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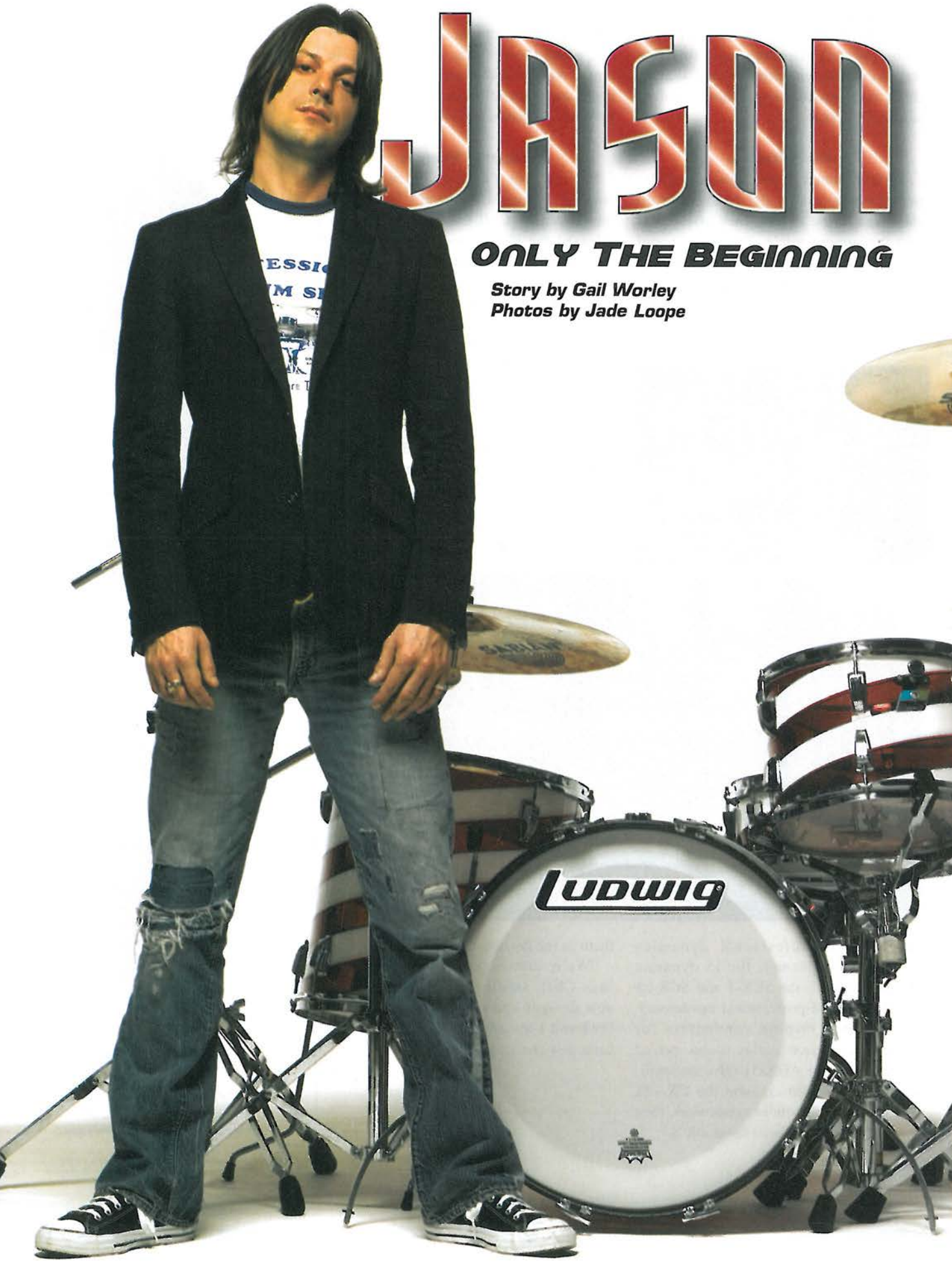
JASON

ONLY THE BEGINNING

Story by Gail Worley
Photos by Jade Loope



SUTTER

PLAYING PROFESSIONALLY SINCE AGE THIRTEEN, JASON SUTTER IS LIKELY ONE OF THE MOST ACCOMPLISHED ROCK DRUMMERS YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF. JASON SPENT THE '90S DRUMMING WITH SEVERAL OF THAT DECADE'S MOST POPULAR ALTERNATIVE ROCK BANDS, AND HIS LIVE WORK INCLUDES ARTISTS AS DIVERSE AS CHANTAL KREVIAZUK, NINA GORDON, BUTCH WALKER, AND TWO WEEKS ON TOUR WITH OUR LADY PEACE (SITTING IN FOR DRUMMER JEREMY TAGGERT).

WITH DEGREES IN MUSIC EDUCATION AND ORCHESTRAL PERFORMANCE, SUTTER'S STYLISTIC VERSATILITY AND ALMOST UNCANNY ABILITY TO NETWORK HAVE ALLOWED HIM TO PAD HIS RÉSUMÉ WITH SESSIONS (JOE WALSH, PINK, CHRIS ROBINSON), MOVIE SOUNDTRACKS (*JOSIE & THE PUSSYCATS*), VIDEOS (BRITNEY SPEARS), AND TELEVISION APPEARANCES (WITH RACHEL YAMAGATA ON *THE OC*)—ALL WHILE CONSISTENTLY FLYING UNDER THE RADAR.

Sutter spent the early part of his career in Boston, drumming for indie rock chanteuse Juliana Hatfield before replacing drummer Stacy Jones in Letters To Cleo when Jones left that band to join Veruca Salt. Coincidentally, Sutter explains, Jones' influence indirectly helped him get the Hatfield gig in the first place. "I'd just moved to Boston and was planning to audition for Juliana," Jason says, "but I realized that I didn't play anything like her previous drummer. Her manager suggested I get the Letters To Cleo records and emulate Stacy's playing to get the job. That was a *huge* relief, because the way he plays was *exactly* how I needed to play for the Hatfield gig."

While still with Letters To Cleo, Sutter joined lo-fi retro rock trio Jack Drag, with whom he toured extensively and recorded two albums. Jack Drag disbanded in the wake of the Universal/Polygram merger, just after the release of 1998's *Dope Box*, and Sutter then joined the touring band of Australian singer/songwriter Ben Lee. "That gig was a great transition from Boston," Jason says, "because I relocated to New York with Ben, and then moved to LA."

Within months of arriving in Los Angeles, Sutter was "catapulted into the 'hip' circle" when he started working with singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist Jason Falkner. "I met Falkner through a mutual friend," the drummer explains. "We connected on a personal level and he invited me to work with him. Jason is an icon to many, and deservedly so, because he's extremely talented. I played a series of live dates with him at the end of his *Can You Still Feel* tour in 2000 and, musically, it was a fantastic experience. Playing with Falkner also emphasized for me that how you conduct yourself *person-*

GIGS

- AMERICAN HI-FI
- JACK DRAG
- JASON FALKNER
- JOE WALSH
- PINK
- CHRIS ROBINSON
- JULIANA HATFIELD

ally can be as important as what you do behind the drums."

In 2004, Sutter's longtime friend Stacy Jones, now lead vocalist with modern rockers American Hi-Fi, asked him to replace that band's recently departed drummer—an offer he couldn't refuse. Having already logged several months of stateside touring in support of American Hi-Fi's latest album, *Hearts On Parade*, Jason took some time out to speak with *Modern Drummer* about his eclectic career and his hope that playing with American Hi-Fi will be the gig that finally puts him on the map.

MD: You've had a lot of formal music education. What important techniques have you learned from studying with various teachers?

Jason: At a young age, I studied with Jim Peterczak and learned the advantages of having a really serious professional's tutelage. I hooked up with Jim because he and my father both taught at Potsdam State College in New York. My dad was a sculptor and Peterczak was an art fan, so my dad traded him a drawing in exchange for my drum lessons. Jim's hands are absolutely fantastic, and his technique is impeccable.

I would sit for hours at a practice pad, practicing this technique Peterczak had hyper-developed, using traditional grip with the last three fingers of your left hand. Dave Weckl, who Jim also taught, talks about that technique in his first video. Jim instilled in me the importance of having great technique and a great understanding of the rudiments.

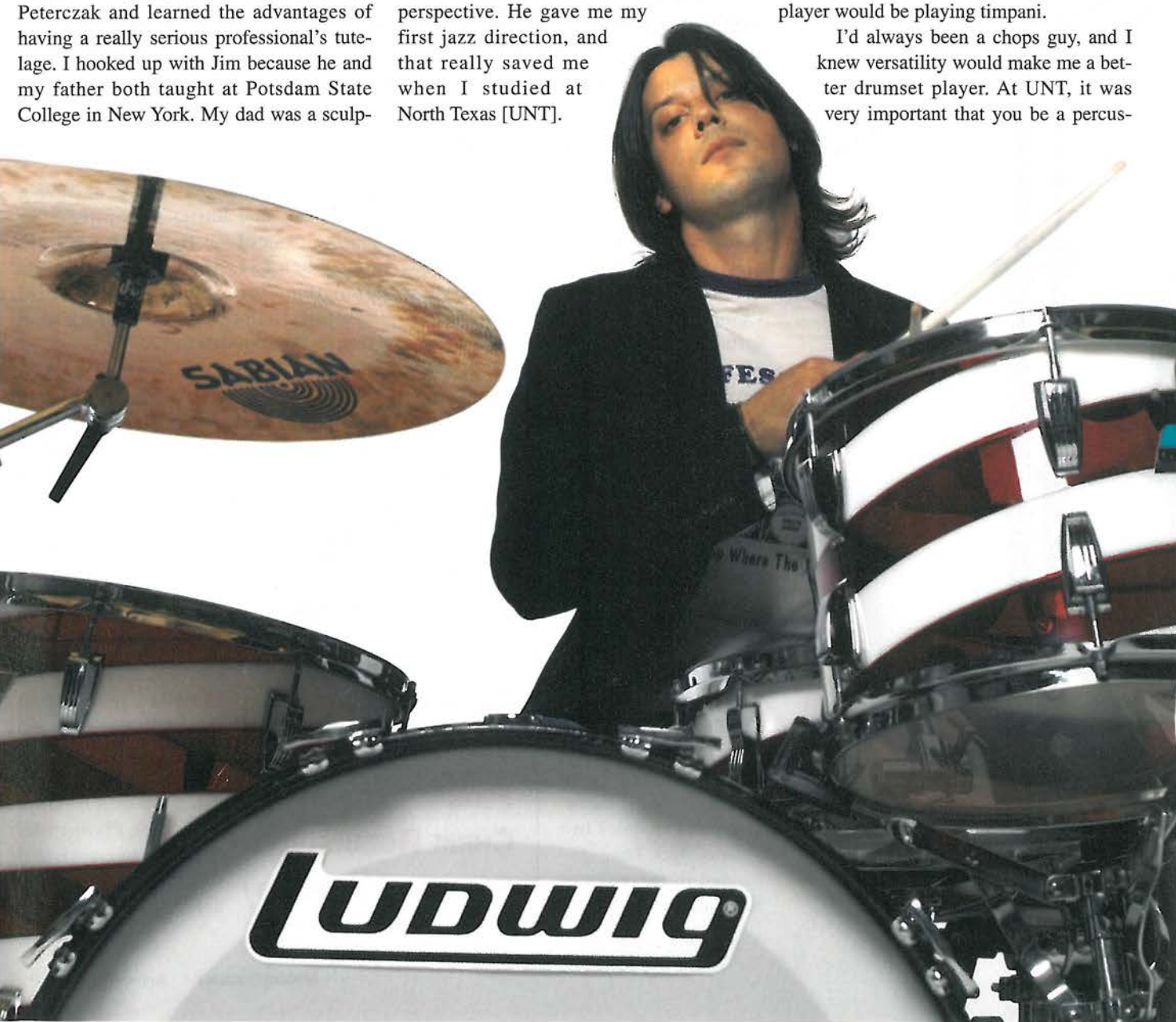
While at Potsdam's Crane School of Music, I studied with Tony Verderosa. Tony was a big inspiration because he was checking out cool players and he hipped me to the fact that Peterczak had taught Weckl when he was my age. Tony really opened me up to great jazz technique and pushed me to harness what I was working on in rock and fusion and to try to put it in perspective. He gave me my first jazz direction, and that really saved me when I studied at North Texas [UNT].

At UNT I was lucky to study snare drum with Ed Soph, because Peterczak called him and said, "This kid's coming down and I want you to teach him." Ed takes a limited number of students, and it's *always* the upperclassmen and graduate student jazz majors. But because Peterczak put in the word, Soph agreed to teach me. I'm a huge brush fanatic, and Soph is probably one of the best—if not *the* best—brush players I've ever seen. He's so musical, it's unbelievable, and he has fantastic, impeccable chops. Ed helped train me and tune my ears.

MD: Did you always have it in mind to be a very versatile drummer?

Jason: Yes. That idea was instilled in me from being at Crane, seeing recitals of these fantastic drumset players who could also blow you away with a four-mallet, three-movement marimba piece. Then you'd go to see the orchestra and that same player would be playing timpani.

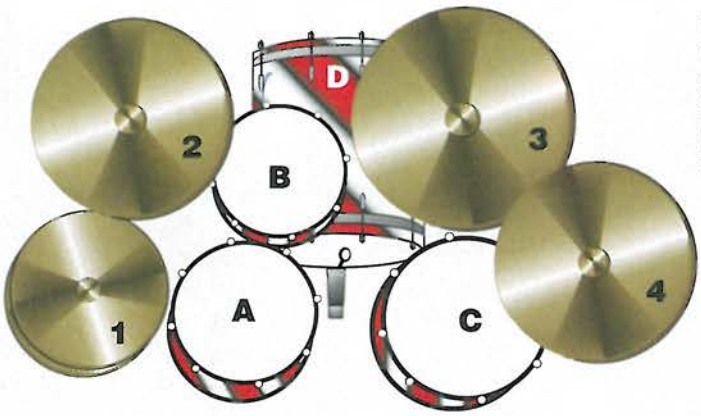
I'd always been a chops guy, and I knew versatility would make me a better drumset player. At UNT, it was very important that you be a percus-



Sutter's Home

Drums: Ludwig Classic Maple
- **A.** 6½x14 Black Beauty snare
- **B.** 9x13 tom (mounted on snare stand)
- **C.** 16x16 floor tom
- **D.** 16x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian (all with brilliant finish)
1. 15" HHX Groove Hats (reversed, bottom on top)
2. 18" AAX Stage crash
3. 20" HHX medium ride
4. 18" AAXplosion crash



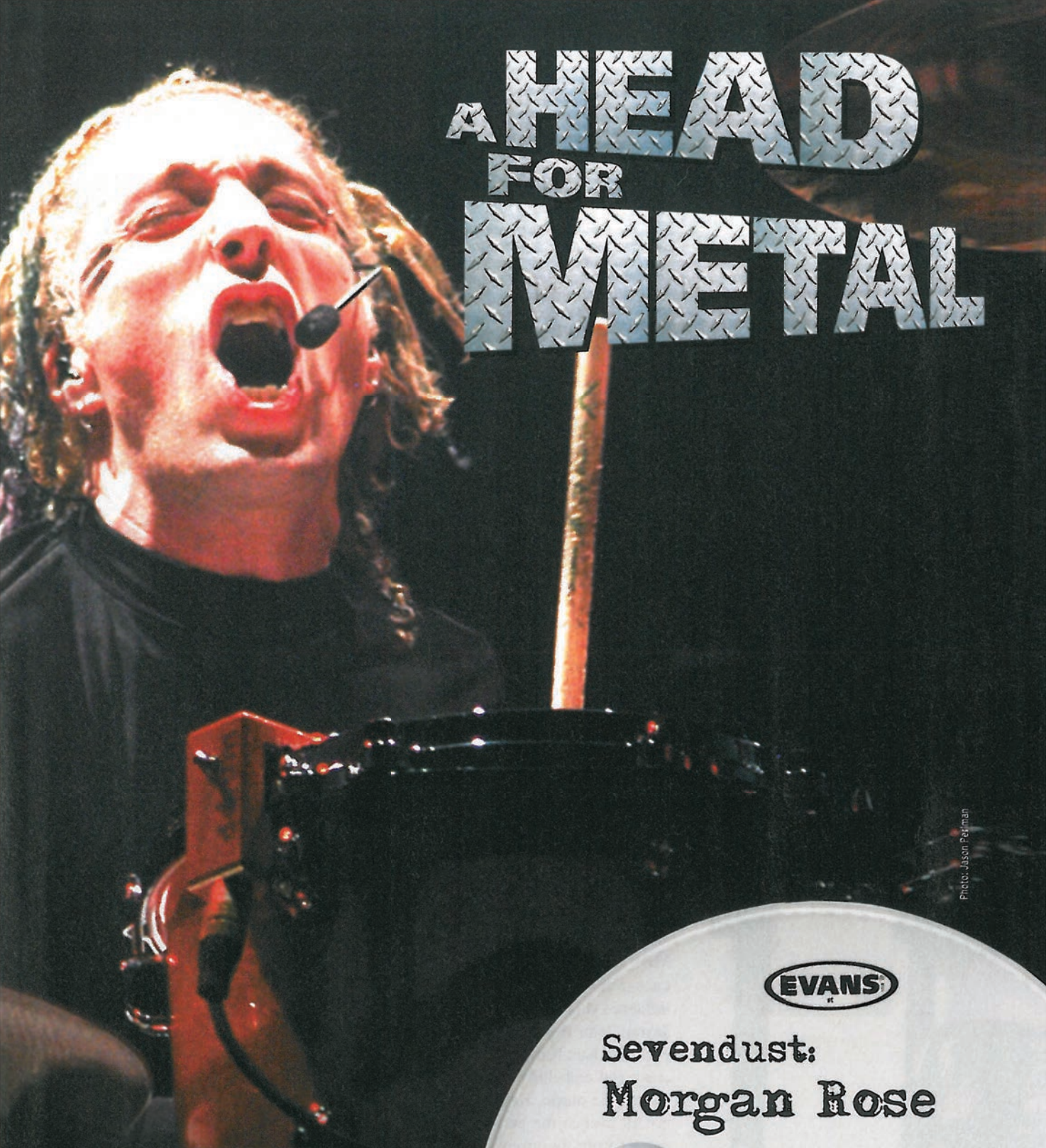
Hardware: All Drum Workshop, including their 5000 Accelerator bass drum pedal
Sticks: Vic Firth Buddy Rich signature model

sionist as *well* as a drumset player, so I also studied gamelan and played in a marimba ensemble and a steel drum band. I was doing all this while trying to work my way into the jazz program, which was *extremely* competitive. I started UNT with about a hundred seventy guys and graduated with thirteen. I then went to grad school at the University Of Miami, where I studied orchestral percussion. I'm a better player today for having gone through all of that. The more you know in percussion, the more you'll work.

MD: Who are your biggest drumset influences, and how did these players most influence your style?

Jason: John Bonham is my biggest influence. Bonham had the ability to groove like crazy and embellish without getting in the way of the music. He'd throw in the craziest fill ever at the perfect time and never detract from the groove. I don't have one recording where he plays poorly. It's not the room, it's not the engineer, it's *him*—everything he touches sounds amazing. When I'm on tour and playing every single night, his inspiration tells me that I've got to play my best.

As far as creativity in jazz, Tony Williams just kills me. The records he did with Miles Davis, like *My Funny Valentine*



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and *Four And More*, are completely amazing. The way he plays his ride cymbal and his other creative touches, he's playing like no one ever had. He was just so brave to play in a way that was uncharted territory. It's very exciting for me to try to do something a little different, where you have a distinctive style. I'm inspired by so many players, but I feel like I'm at a level in my career where I can aspire to sound like myself. [laughs]

MD: Jack Drag is probably the gig that you're best known for. Tell me about that band's unorthodox approach to percussion.

Jason: Playing in Jack Drag was a great experience. Prior to hooking up with me and Joe [Klompus, bassist], John [Dragonetti, vocalist/guitarist] didn't have any overdubs because I'd be playing a shaker and a tambourine with my foot, doing all of these counterpoints simultaneously. I know that Jack Drag made me such a better player, because when I started doing other rock gigs after moving to LA, they were all so easy. [laughs] When I got back to playing a simple rock beat, it took a little adjusting.

MD: How does the gig with American Hi-Fi allow you to stretch as a player?

Jason: These guys let me do whatever I want. For example, there's a breakdown in the song "Happy," which we close our set with. Drew, our bassist, came up to me and said, "Dude, just go off. Just take us on an adventure." Before that, I'd been following what their old drummer had done or just

IF YOU PUT IT OUT THERE IN LOS ANGELES, YOU *WILL* GET CALLS FROM SOMEONE. IT'S A MATTER OF PERSEVERING, RUBBING ELBOWS, AND BEING SEEN.

a band, so he played everything himself. It was great trying to get inside John's head—and John had a *lot* going on in his head—and try to figure out this Beck-ish style of music interpreted by John on drums.

My kit was set up differently in that group, and I had to really change my style. I also started playing on drums I'd never played before, which were really boom-y Vistalites. I had shakers or brushes in my hand more often than I had sticks, and I used the drumset differently from the way I normally would, approaching it as creatively as possible.

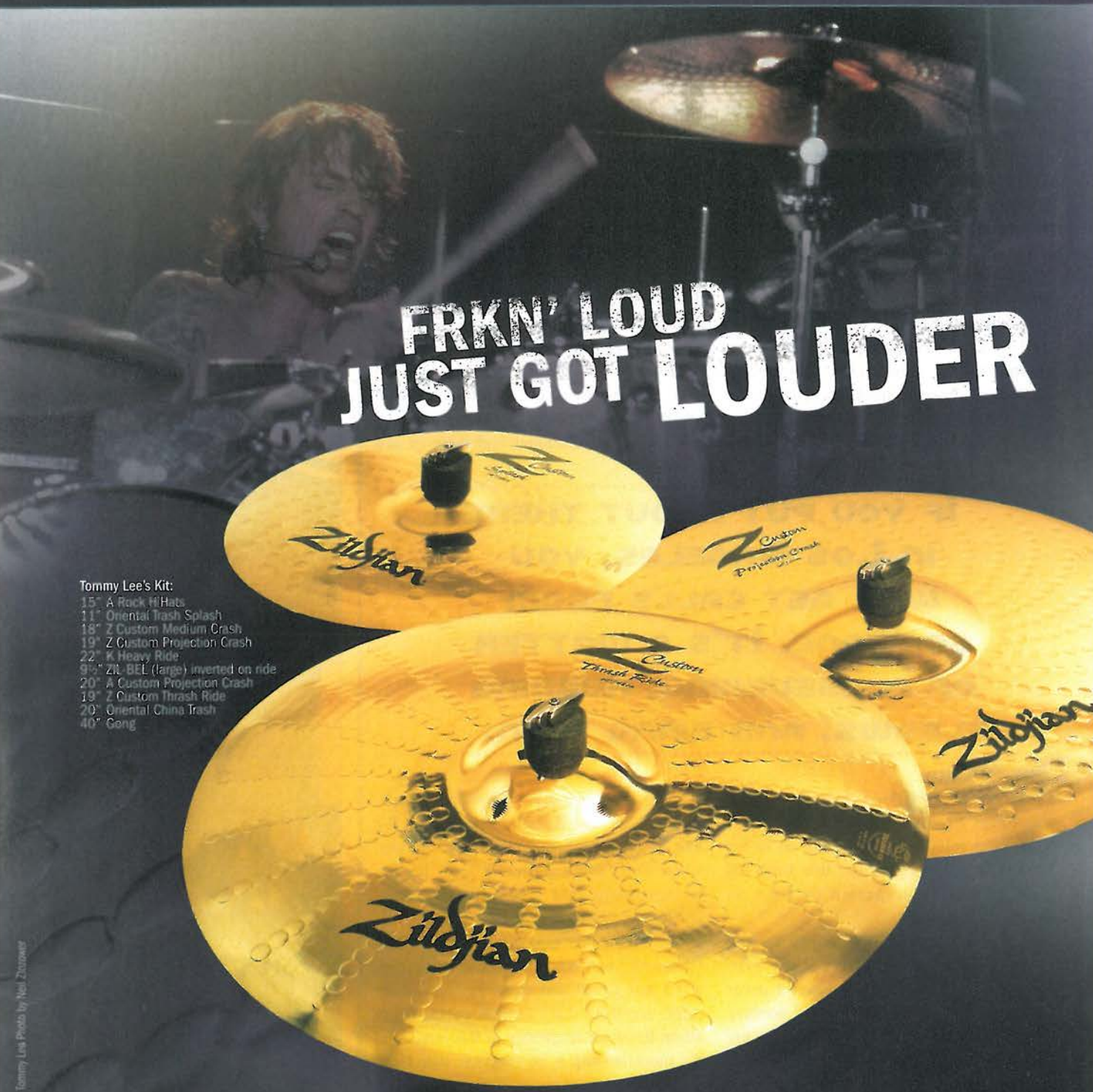
Being in Jack Drag was like playing in a mini symphony, trying to make as much sound as we could with three people. It was trippy and groove-y, but with an undertow of these very strange beats, because John was influenced by beats he heard growing up in the Middle East. I was creating little percussion ensembles for each song, and it took a *lot* of concentration to do those gigs.

When we made a record, I hardly did keeping it simple. Now it's such an exciting part, because it constantly evolves. It's like an open "Whole Lotta Love" middle, where Drew and I get into a zone. It's fun to experiment, take it to different places, and see where we end up.

There's another tune we do called "Wall Of Sound" that has a 6/8 thing at the end, and I just go off and throw in some crazy three-over-four contrapuntal parts. We're all on the same frequency in this band, and the musicianship is so fantastic that I can do whatever I want and they *love* it. It's almost like a jazz gig, in that you're riding on what everyone is doing. That makes it easy to be creative.

MD: You've had some very fun and interesting gigs. Can you give any advice on how to create opportunities for oneself as a drummer?

Jason: Take every gig. Never turn down a gig because you don't think you're good enough, because you'll learn and grow from that experience. The busier you are, the busier you'll stay, because



Tommy Lee Photo by Neil Zlozower

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LA is a great social scene where rock 'n' roll is embraced. When I first moved here I went out *every night* and that's how I met the girl who introduced me to Jason Falkner. Going out every night, you meet people, and the next thing you know you're getting a call from somebody who heard about you from someone you've met. If you put it out there in Los Angeles, you *will* get calls from someone. It's a matter of persevering, rubbing elbows, and being seen. Eventually you'll walk into an audition and see someone you know. That connection will break the ice and maybe you'll get the gig because you knew this guy on a personal level *and* you did well in the audition.

I've also supplemented playing drums with teaching as much as I can. I taught at the LA Music Academy with Ralph Humphrey and Joe Porcaro, which was a great experience. It was something I could pay my bills with but still go to auditions and have sticks in my hands. There are lots of ways to do that. During summers in college I played on cruise ships and at Disneyworld. That was a way to make more connections, keep playing, get better, and not get distracted from the goal, which is to ultimately be in the position that I'm at now; playing drums at a higher level to a bigger audience.

MD: Do you have survival tips for players who are stepping into a lot of sessions or touring gigs?

Jason: It's really about how adaptable you are. Auditioning is a great way to learn about yourself and get feedback. The more you do it, the easier it is to become the drummer who makes everyone happy. You don't want to steal your bro's gig, but at the same time it's the ultimate compliment when the band you're filling in with tells you that they like the way you play a certain song better than their regular guy.

It's also important to play with confidence and conviction. Just go in with both barrels blazing. There are very few bands that will say, "I wish that guy could have been a little more timid."

There's an *essence* to playing that I strive for. Essence is the only word I can think of. It's what makes Bonham *Bonham*. Maybe you're playing 2 and 4 and that's *it*, but it makes the person you're playing with want to pick up their guitar and play. It says so much when they can tell from just that 2 and 4 that you can blow chops at the drop of a hat. Drumming is so simple; it's really just about finding the essence of what makes it feel good.

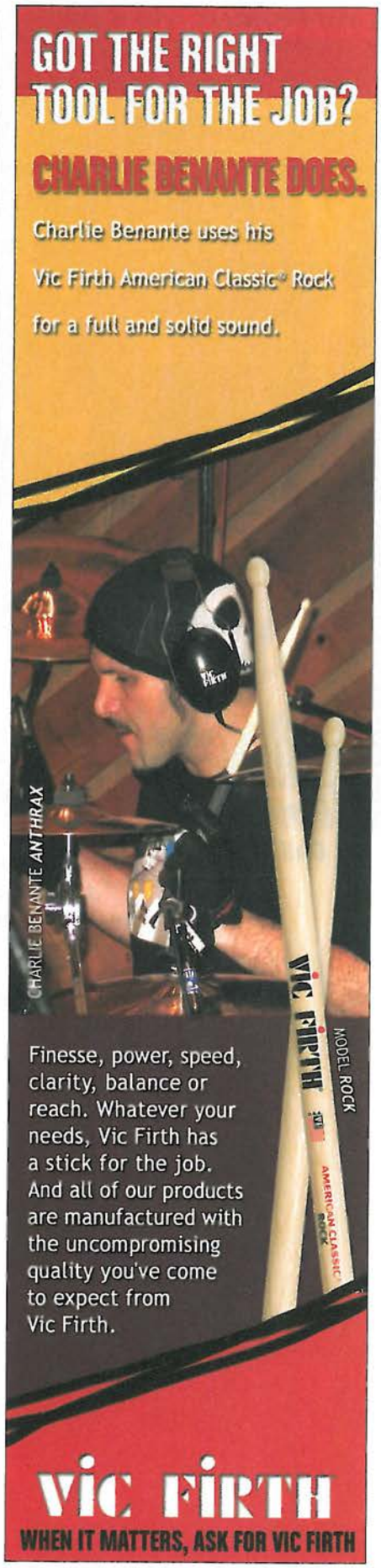
MD: How did you start teaching the players in Blue Man Group?

Jason: I was teaching privately in Boston to supplement my income from Jack Drag when a Blue Man came in to study with me. He actually became one of my best pupils, ever. He got me hooked up with a gig teaching The Blue Man Group in Boston because, while many of them are great drummers, some are just actors who've never held a pair of sticks. My job was to get eight guys to warm up and play together; get the heights of their sticks together and get them thinking on the same wavelength, much like you would on an eight-piece snare line, but on a more primal level.

Interestingly enough, that gig led to me getting a call from Steven Spielberg's people. They'd contacted Blue Man Group looking for actors who could drum for the movie *AI*. They passed my number along to Spielberg's assistant, who called me in LA and asked for a video of me playing percussion. I sent them my graduate recital from Miami, where I'm playing "The Black Page" by Frank Zappa, a four-mallet marimba piece, and a multi-percussion piece. [laughs] When the video was returned to me, it included a letter saying, "Loved the video, can't wait to work with you. Steven Spielberg." It was *bizarre*. The next thing I knew, I was on the set in Long Beach for three weeks filming the Flesh Fair scene. I'm credited, but I'm only on screen for two seconds.

I've had a lot of great, weird experiences because I've stuck it out and put myself in the right position. There are lots of drummers who have been playing forever, and they're killing it, but you'll never hear of them until they land that one gig that gets their name out there. I think the American Hi-Fi gig has shed a little more light on me, and I'm so lucky to be playing with three of my best friends in the world. When we get on stage every night it's like, "This is what it's all about." I feel like I've arrived, but it's still just the beginning.

Hear Jason Sutter and American Hi-Fi on MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.



Michael Wagener

Creator Of That Big Rock Sound

by Gail Worley

Producer/engineer Michael Wagener may not be a household name, but to the drummers he's worked with during a twenty-five year career, he is legendary. Mötley Crüe, Skid Row, Alice Cooper, Ozzy Osbourne, Megadeth, and Metallica are but a few of the names on a résumé that reads like a who's who of heavy metal and hard rock. Wagener works with the best in the business because he's considered to be the best.

"I feel like Michael and I were meant to work together," says Jerry Gaskill of King's X. "He is an absolute joy to work with, and he knows beyond a shadow of a doubt *exactly* what he's doing. Making an album with him has been my greatest recording experience working with a producer."

Drummer Ken Mary, who played on Alice Cooper's *Raise Your Fist & Yell,* appreciates Michael's willingness to experiment when going for the best live room or ambient drum sound. "He really is a perfectionist in mic' placement, room tone, drumheads, and everything regarding the performance," Ken offers. "Just listen. Michael's work speaks for itself."

Warrant's Steven Sweet remembers Wagener as the first producer he'd worked with who implemented digital recording with a computer in conjunction with traditional analog tape. "He was extremely progressive in his approach to building the best record possible," says Sweet.

Michael Cartellone of Lynyrd Skynyrd played drums on several Wagener productions, including the all-star *Randy Rhoads Tribute*. "Michael is known for capturing amazing drum sounds," says Cartellone. "But one of the coolest things about him is that he's done *so many* high-profile albums without being that 'superstar producer.' Michael Wagener is one of a kind."

Wagener was born and raised in Germany, where he started out playing guitar in Band X, a metal band he'd formed with childhood friend Udo Dirkschneider. But the young musician was forced to quit when he was drafted into the army at the

age of nineteen. "Moving 350 miles away made it difficult to practice," he laughs. Band X replaced Michael with a new guitarist, changed its name to Accept, and went on to become one of heavy metal's most innovative and influential bands. Michael has since produced five of the group's albums.

After leaving the army, Wagener studied for his degree in electronics while working for Stramp, a Hamburg-based designer and manufacturer of studio and stage equipment. "Stramp had a small studio set up in order to show our equipment," says Wagener. "I eventually realized that *using* the equipment was a lot more fun than building it. From there I went into engineering, and in 1979 I built Tennessee Studio in Hamburg."

Shortly after opening Tennessee Studio, Wagener met vocalist Don Dokken while recording the singer's live performance at a club adjacent to the studio. "Don invited me to come to America," says Michael, "and I took him up on that offer. Three weeks later I showed up, fell in love with the States, and decided to move there. Later, Don came back to Germany and we recorded the first Dokken album together. That was my first production job." Michael continued to work with Dokken, producing the group's multi-platinum sellers *Breaking The Chains* and *Under Lock And Key*.

Traveling between the US and Germany, Wagener produced, engineered, and mixed records for bands as varied as Mötley Crüe, Great White, The Plasmatics, and X, before permanently relocating to the States in 1984. Currently residing in Nashville, Wagener owns the state-of-the-art recording facility Wireworld. In this interview, Michael talks about his favorite drummers, his professional philosophy, and the recording techniques that keep him in demand as one of the premier producers of hard rock and metal music.

MD: From your extensive background in metal and hard rock, have you noticed a difference in the way hard rock drummers play today compared to the 1980s and '90s?

Michael: In the '80s, hard rock drumming was more about a straight 2 and 4 groove—especially when you listen to bands like AC/DC and Mötley Crüe. It's kick on 1 and 3 and snare on 2 and 4. In the '90s it wasn't as straightforward anymore. Drummers got a lot busier, playing more grace notes on the snare and trying different patterns. Of course, there are always bands like Rush that are just *out there* in terms of drumming...in terms of *everything*, really.

MD: Do you think some of the '80s metal drummers such as Rikki Rockett of Poison and Steven Sweet from Warrant deserve more props than they got, because people were distracted by the image of those bands?

Michael: I think so, yes. There are many great musicians around who didn't get enough credit for the exact reason you mentioned. I worked with Steven Sweet, and he's brilliant. He has a very weird style. He plays his hi-hat with his left hand and his snare with his right hand, which is the opposite of how most drummers would do it. His setup is the same as everybody else's, though. It's weird to see him play like that, but he makes it work very well.

MD: You have a long history with the band Accept. How did drummer Stefan Kaufmann help define Accept's distinctive sound?

Michael: Stefan is very innovative. He's always thinking, not only in terms of drums but also in terms of the whole sound picture of the band. He built his own bass drums that are 26" in diameter by 40" deep, with 1-mm steel around them so they were really tight. You can imagine it was a bit of a nightmare for an engineer to get any tone out of those, because they were so low. (laughs)

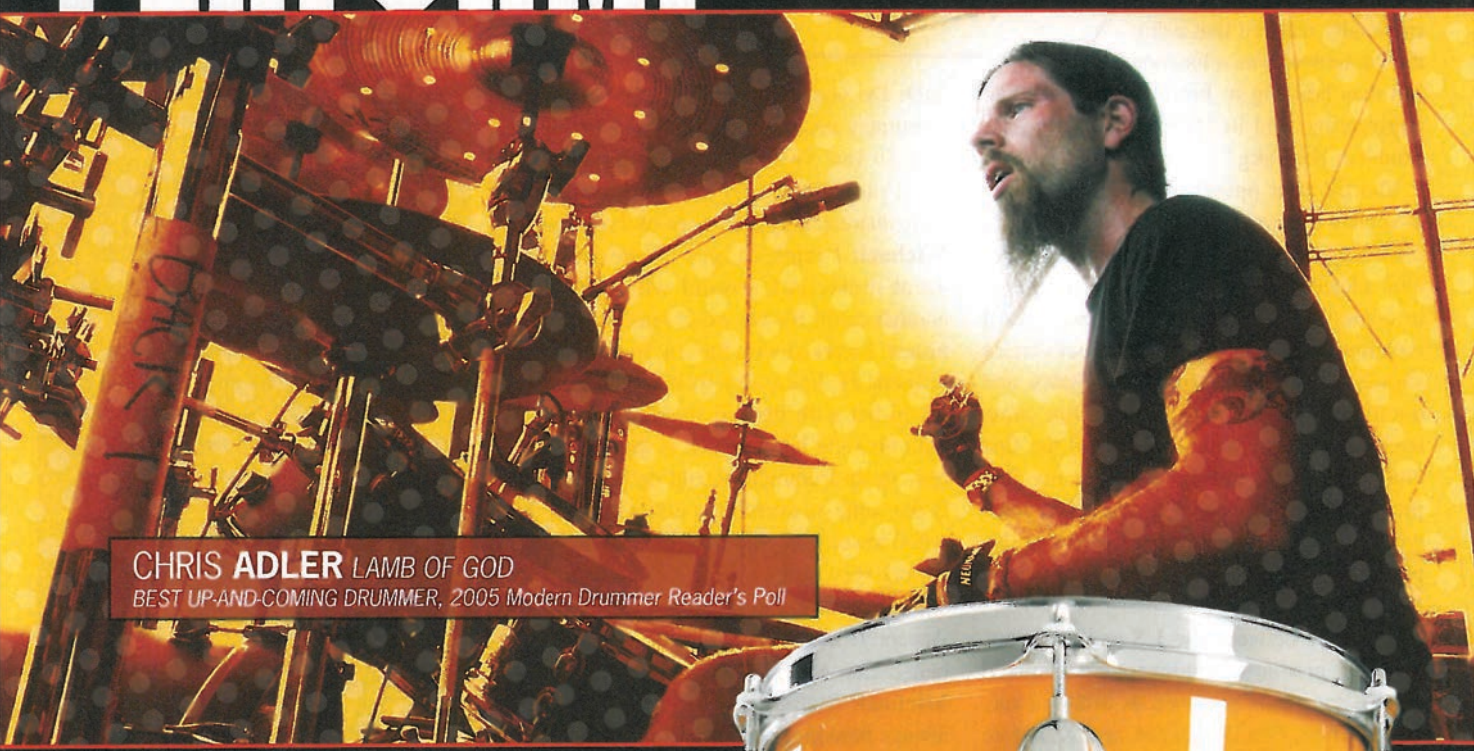
There's one song called "Fast As A Shark" that Stefan played standing up, basically running on the bass drum pedals. He came to me afterwards and said, "I don't have a timing problem with this one. This is as fast as I can play!" Stefan was

Hit List

Accept
Alice Cooper
King's X
Megadeth
Metallica
Mötley Crüe
Ozzy Osbourne
Skid Row
Warrant

MAPEX

PERFORM.



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also very involved in getting the drum sounds.

MD: You produced the first Skid Row album, where drummer Rob Affuso had a huge, bombastic drum sound. How did you work with Rob for that record?

Michael: We recorded *Skid Row* at Royal Recorders in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. That studio was in a big hotel, attached to a convention center where there was one *huge* room. We chose that space to record in because Roy Thomas Baker recommended it as the place to capture a big drum sound. The day we set up our drums we realized it was actually *too* big, so we had to put baffles closer to the drums.

We recorded though an SSL console, which has something called a "Listen" mic' with a heavy compressor on it. It's basically a microphone that you put in a room to be able to listen to the musicians when they're talking. When they start playing, the compressor is supposed to shut the mic' all the way down. We used that as a room mic' for the drums, so most of the reverb you hear on the drums on that album is actually that room.

As for Rob, you can tell by listening to the record that he really pounds the drums. He goes a lot by feel, but he's a very heavy hitter and an all-around great rock drummer.

MD: Who are some of your favorite drummers?

Michael: Jerry Gaskill of King's X is absolutely on the top of the list. It's wonderful to watch him play because he's so concentrated and so into it. He's a brilliant drummer, and he gets great tones. If you work something out with Jerry, you can count on him to play it the same way all the time.

Ken Mary, the drummer on Alice Cooper's *Raise Your Fist & Yell*, is great. He would play with a click track, come into the control room afterwards, and just listen to the snare and the click. If there was *one beat* off the click, he would go and play it again, and *then* it was right. Ken also played on a record I produced by the German band Bonfire. He's now a producer out in Phoenix.

I worked briefly with Anton Fig when he recorded Sebastian Bach's solo record, and he basically blew my mind. Michael Sweet from Stryper is another favorite. When we recorded *Soldiers Under Command* we spent all day getting drum sounds. We were done by about 7:00 P.M., so I suggested that we record one track, then take it home and listen to it. But Michael said he wanted to play the whole album. I thought he was joking, but he did it. By 7:00 the next morning we were done with ten songs. It was pretty crazy.

Two guys I'd like to work with are Phil Rudd from AC/DC and Alex Van Halen. Those guys are both amazing groove players. I always liked Ginger Baker, even though he was one of the busier drummers. And I love Keith Moon.

MD: When you're mixing, where do you like the drums to sit in the mix?

Michael: That's changed a lot over the past twenty years. In the '80s, with the invention of digital reverb, *everything* got soaked in reverb. Now if you just *say* the word "reverb," everyone looks at you funny. [laughs] Drums have become a lot dryer in hard rock over the years. On the King's X record I just completed, there's no reverb on any of the drums. When I was mixing Metallica's *Master Of Puppets*, the guys were adamant that they didn't want any reverb on anything. They wanted it absolutely plain—and that record came out great. That's the big change over the past few years, and I'm not sad that it's gone.

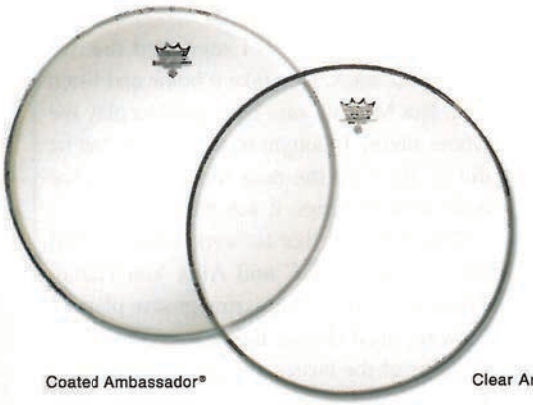
I don't like triggering drums. Even if natural drums don't sound as good as a sample, I'd prefer the original drum sound played by the drummer. I'm very much into avoiding ProTools, and *not* time-aligning the drums. I'd rather that a drummer play a little bit off the click—or with no click—and *feel it*, rather than have everything perfect. My way of looking at music is that I'd rather leave it a little bit raw and less compressed, so you can feel the band actually playing.

MD: Do you think metal calls for a double bass approach?

Michael: Certain kinds of music—Metallica, for example—are fast enough for double bass playing. But I'm coming more from the hard rock side, which is a bit more straightforward. Instead of double bass, we mostly use a single bass drum with two pedals. When you have two bass drums and play both together, there's a lot of low-end build-up. But with one bass drum and two pedals, as soon as the second pedal hits, it stops the note from the first hit. That makes it a lot clearer and cleaner on the bottom end.

MD: Let's talk about the space you have for recording drums at your studio, Wireworld.

Michael: Wireworld is built out of a three-



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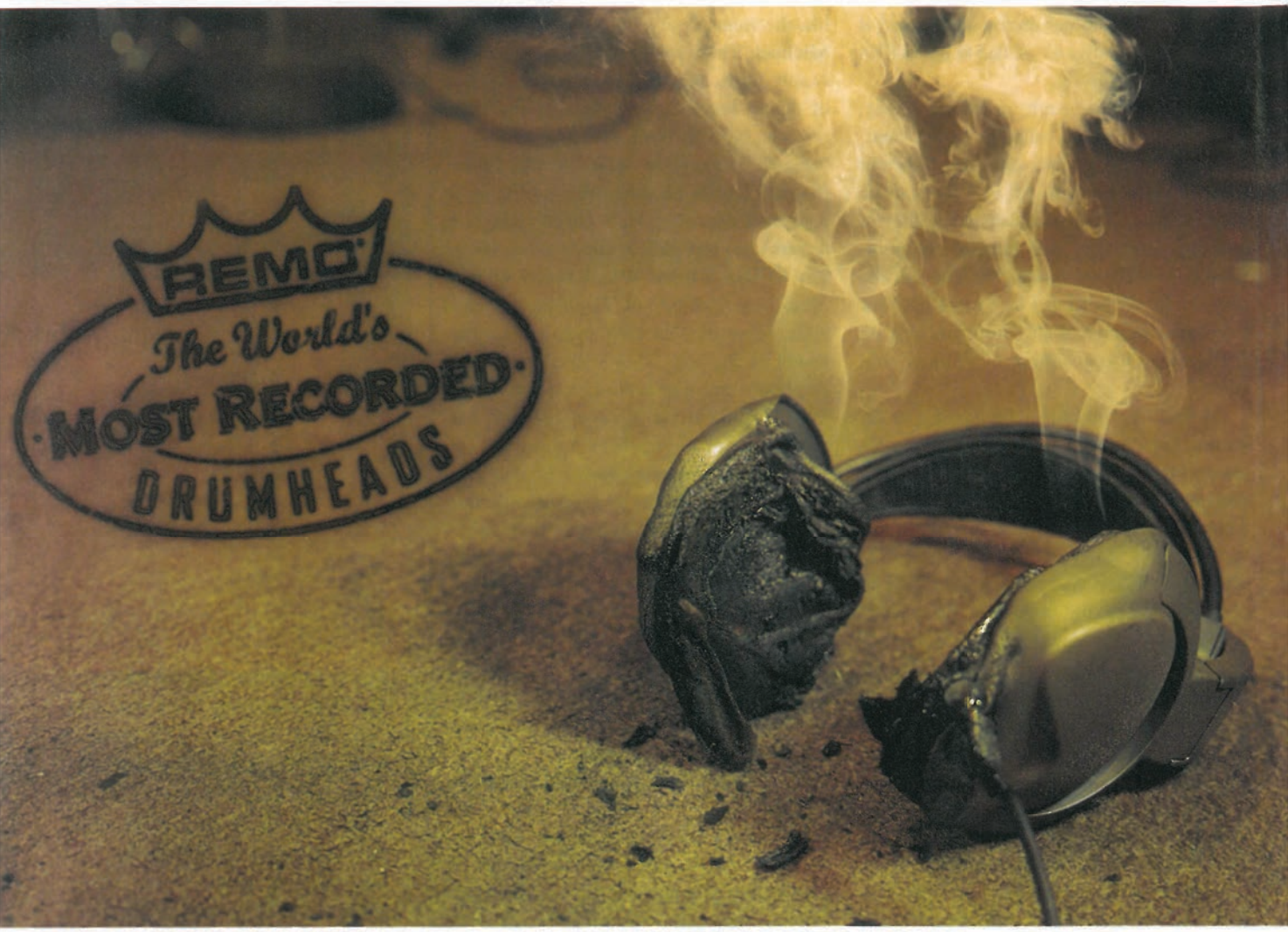

Will Calhoun
Living Colour

Matt
Chamberlain
Independent

Vinnie Colaiuta
Drumming
Great

Anton Fig
The David
Letterman Show

Steve Gadd
Drumming
Legend /
Eric Clapton

David Garibaldi
Tower of Power

Omar Hakim
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Joey Heredia
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Tommy Igoe
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car garage, and we basically designed it all around a Ludwig snare. [laughs] The walls and ceilings are drywall and the floor is cement, so when it's empty the room is *really* loud and echo-y, but in a good way. It doesn't have audible reflections; it just has a great room tone to it. I've used that room many times for people who brought me drum tapes or stuff to mix. It's great when I want to re-send the drums out to speakers, re-mike them with a Neumann head, and add some room sound. The room is only 12' by 22', but it's very big-sounding. Of course, I can go in there and pad the walls, put up baffles or insulation, and make it as dead as necessary, but I think you've got to start with a live room.

I remember that on Warrant's *Dog Eat Dog* we did two weeks of pre-production in a rehearsal room where the drums sounded great. But when we actually got into the studio, they sounded awful. It was a studio where the room was built in a classical way and was pretty dead. To modify the acoustics of that studio and get the drums sounding the way they were in the rehearsal room, we bought a bunch of 4' by 8' pieces of plywood and put them up against the walls to make the room a lot more live. That worked out, but if I were faced with that same problem now I'd go back to the rehearsal room and record the drums there, which is what we should have done. [laughs]

MD: What are some of your techniques for getting good drum sounds?

Michael: When you look back a bit from modern recording techniques, it all started with *one* microphone. Everyone stood around one mic', and if you were too loud you had to move away. Now, with multi-miking and multi-tracking, we're recording 60 to 100 tracks. Everything is split apart, including the drumset. The snare is separate from the toms and kick drum.

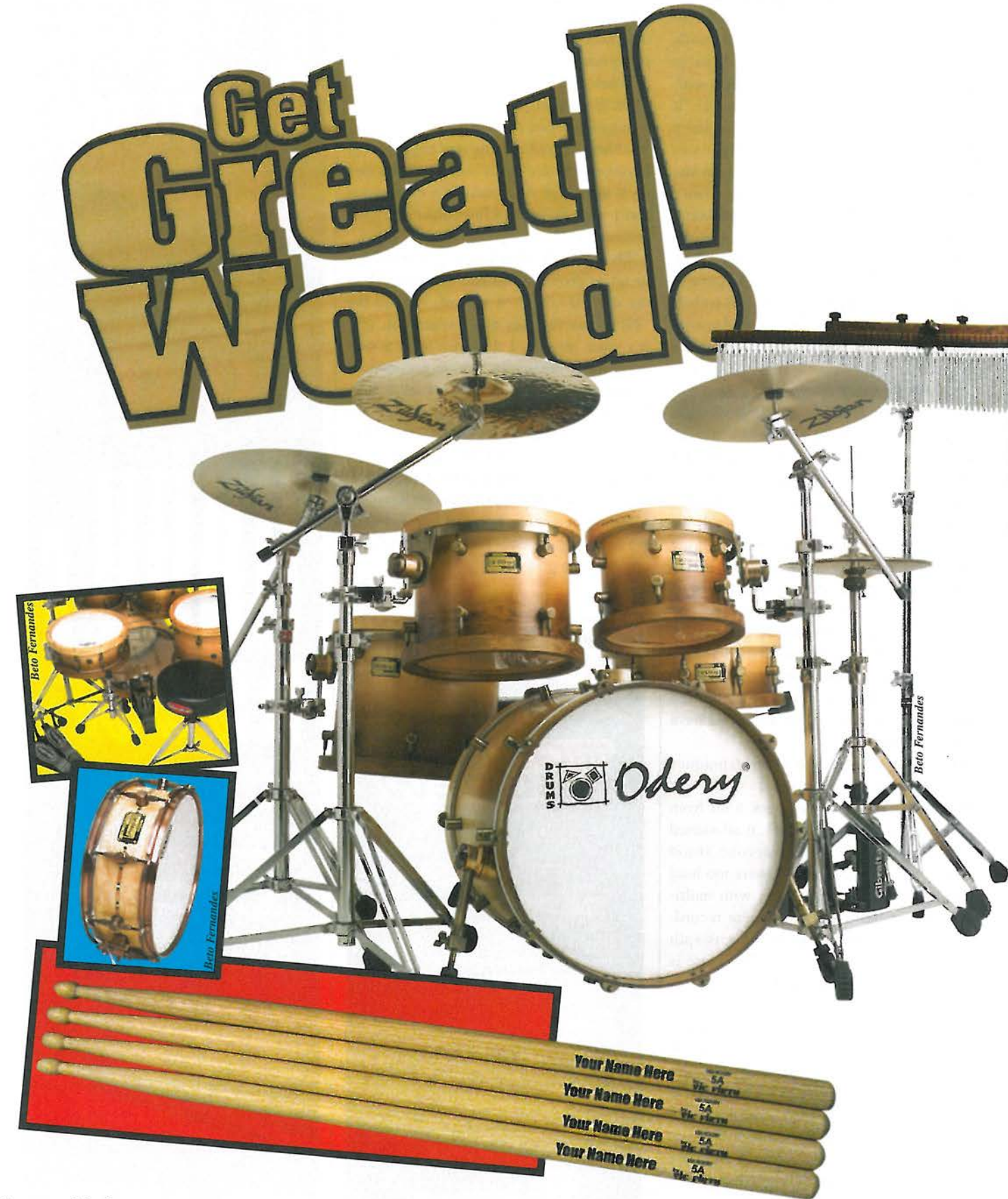
To me, the whole drumset is still *one instrument*, and it has to sound good as such. The dynamics should come from the drummer. In other words, if you're in a good room, you should be able to put up one or two mic's and get a great sound out of that drumset. To get a punchier drum sound, maybe I'll use a bunch of close mic's as well. But I'll still base everything on that room or overall drum mic', and let the drummer provide the dynamics.

In too many cases today, the record is actually performed by an engineer. I think the musicians should be the ones doing the performance. That's what I base my ideas on when getting sounds.

MD: How has your job as a producer changed between the 1980s and now?

Michael: I do producing *and* engineering, because I'm very hands-on. I'd rather just do it than have to explain to a middleman that I want the snare a little bluer or a little greener.

The most changes I've experienced are in actual drum sounds and the approach to the overall sound of a band. During the '80s it was very big and washed out; now it's more precise. I think we're in a very good time, musically. We've got melody again, and bands that can actually *play*. King's X, for example, is a band that can play everything at the same time. They swing together, and you can *hear* it. People have realized that modern recording tools are helpful, but they can't replace a feeling in a song. I always say that what we're selling is emotions, and there's no emotion in a grid.



Consumer Disclosure

1. To enter: Send a 3.5" x 5.5" or 4" x 6" postcard with your name, address, telephone number, and email address (if applicable) to: Modern Drummer/Odery/Zildjian Contest, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. To enter online, visit www.moderndrummer.com on or after 7/1/05 and follow the links to the Odery/Zildjian Contest. 2. Send as many postcards as you wish, but each hand-written postcard entry must be mailed separately. 3. ODDS OF WINNING EACH PRIZE DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 4. CONTEST BEGINS 7/1/05 AND ENDS 9/30/05. POSTCARDS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 9/30/05 AND RECEIVED BY 10/6/05. 5. The winner will be selected by random drawing on or before October 13, 2005 and notified by phone on or about October 14, 2005. 6. Employees and their immediate families of Modern Drummer, Odery, Zildjian, Kaman Corporation, Vic Firth, Inc., TreeWorks, J. D'Addario & Co., and their affiliates are ineligible. 7. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 8. Open to the residents of US and Canada (except in Florida and the Province of Quebec), 12 years of age or older. Void where prohibited by law. 9. One prize awarded per household per contest. 10. Grand prize: One (1) winner will

Enter Now To Win This Incredible Prize Package From Odery, Zildjian, Gibraltar, TreeWorks, Evans, Vic Firth, and Modern Drummer!

Grand Prize

A Five-Piece Set Of Odery Drums

This is the actual kit reviewed and praised in the April issue of *Modern Drummer*. It's made from araucaria wood finished in imbuia fade, and features wooden hoops as well as hardware finished in antique bronze. Drums include a 16x20 bass drum, 8x10, 9x12, and 12x14 toms, and a 6x13 snare.

Zildjian K Custom Cymbals

K Customs arm you with a collection of modern K voices like no other. Whether it's the warm shimmering tones of a ride cymbal, or the complex sizzle of a pair of hi-hats, these cymbals all create a uniquely beautiful sound. Your cymbal set includes 13" K Custom Dark hi-hats, a 16" K Custom Fast crash, an 18" K Custom Fast crash, and a 20" K Custom ride.

Gibraltar Hardware

Gibraltar's 9600 Series Professional stands and pedals are designed to be heavy-duty, but not heavy. Cymbal stands feature smaller profiles, double-braced leg assemblies, cast hideaway booms with hinged boom memory locks, and Gibraltar's exclusive 360° tilters. All stands have Gibraltar's Super-Lock height adjustments with hinged memory locks and ABS inserts for no metal-to-metal contact. This month's prize package includes a 9607ML hi-hat, a 9606 Ultra Adjust snare stand, four 9609-BT boom cymbal stands with brake-style tilters, a 9611DB Intruder double bass drum pedal, a 9608 round throne, and three 10.5-mm SC-SLRM L rod mounts.

A TreeWorks InfiniTree

The collapsible InfiniTree bar chime set is almost four feet long and features 140 bars that are made from chime-specific aluminum/titanium alloy and individually hand-tied with 50-pound braided CordLoc.

Vic Firth Sticks

To play all this great gear, you'll also get three bricks (a dozen pairs each) of Vic Firth Player's Label sticks custom-printed with your name, plus a Vic Firth T-shirt.

Evans Drumheads

Your Odery drums will be fitted with Evans Clear G2 tom heads, which offer an ideal blend of depth, sustain, and attack, making small toms sing and floor toms growl. Your snare will come with a single-ply Power Center head that offers durability and focus in the center via a 5-mil patch. And your bass drum will be fitted with a clear EMAD single-ply head with two interchangeable damping rings that maximize attack and low-end.

2nd Prize

An Odery 5.5x14 Snare Drum

This snare is made from araucaria wood, and it's finished in Radica maple lacquer with an inlay. Evans drumheads, 2.3-mm power hoops, and hardware brushed in an old copper finish complete this beautiful drum.

Vic Firth Player's Label Sticks

You'll also receive two dozen pairs of custom Vic Firth sticks with your name imprinted on them, plus a Vic Firth T-shirt.

3rd Prize

Vic Firth Player's Label Sticks

This month's third-prize winner will receive a dozen pairs of Vic Firth Player's Label Sticks with your name imprinted on them, as well as a Vic Firth T-shirt.

receive an Odery five-piece, wood-hoop, araucaria drumset, Zildjian K Custom cymbals including one (1) pair 13" K Custom hi-hats, one (1) 16" K Custom Fast crash, one (1) 18" K Custom Fast crash, and one (1) 20" K Custom ride, Gibraltar hardware, one (1) TreeWorks InfiniTree, three (3) dozen pairs of Vic Firth Player's Label drumsticks with the winner's name imprinted on each stick and one (1) T-shirt, and a set of Evans drumheads. Approximate retail value: $9,650. Second prize: One (1) Odery $5\frac{1}{2}$x14 snare with brushed copper hardware finish, two (2) dozen pairs of Vic Firth Player's Label drumsticks with winner's name imprinted on each stick, and one (1) Vic Firth T-shirt. Approximate retail value: $1,290. Third prize: one (1) dozen pairs of Vic Firth Player's Label drumsticks with winner's name imprinted on each stick, and one (1) Vic Firth T-shirt. Approximate retail price: $160. 11. Approximate retail value of contest: $11,100. 12. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 13. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or a winners list, write to Modern Drummer Publications, Odery/Zildjian Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

A Cymbal Shakeup

Paiste 2002 And Giant Beat Lines

In recognition of the stylistic diversity in rock music, Paiste is expanding its 2002 series, withdrawing the Dimension series from the market, and re-launching the Giant Beat series.

Increasing demand for the classic 2002 sound has led Paiste to make that line a core series for the future. The most innovative Dimensions models, as well as selected former Exotic/Percussion models, are to be incorporated into the expanded 2002 line, making it a very up-to-date series with a vast choice of cymbal sounds.

To celebrate the renewed emphasis on the 2002 series, Paiste is issuing a 48-page booklet that recounts the background of 2002 cymbals within the context of rock history. The booklet also highlights drummers who have used 2002 cymbals along the way.

Giant Beat cymbals, first introduced in 1967, were noted for their big yet sensitive sound, unique looks, and vintage character. Like 2002 cymbals, the re-launched Giant Beat cymbals are made entirely by hand in Switzerland using traditional methods that have remained unchanged in over half a century.

(800) 472-4783, www.paiste.com.

Lots O' Latin

New Instruments From LP

Latin Percussion has introduced a bevy of new instruments. To begin with, the original 11" Giovanni Compact Conga—a slim-line, frame-like drum that produces conga tones suitable for practice, live, or studio—now comes in a larger ($11\frac{3}{4}$") size. The result is said to be a rich frequency spectrum, without compromising the essential portability of this novel instrument. List price is $259.

LP's Aspire line of affordable congas, bongos, and djembes is now offered in a Vintage Sunburst finish that goes from rich, dark stained wood through amber and honey to a burst of yellow light (and then back again). All Aspire drums are constructed from kiln dried Siam oak and come with premium black powder-coated hardware including EZ Curve rims. Natural rawhide heads are standard, and a tuning wrench is included. Conga sets come with either one double stand or two Universal basket stands. List prices are $429 for a 10"/11" set and $439 for an 11"/12" set. Individual drums are also available, including a 12" tumba at $199. Aspire Vintage Sunburst bongos list for $109; $12\frac{1}{2}$" djembes list for $229.

A new, larger LP Giovanni Series Galaxy djembe provides deep, resonant bottom-end frequencies along with crisp highs. The 14" head diameter is said to project all the sonic features desired in a djembe, including crisp slaps, interesting high harmonics, and the foundation frequencies that kick into sub-low territory. List price is $699.

Finally, the LP Gajate Bracket has been strengthened with upgraded steel construction. The unit's new design will store easier in trap cases. The front anchor has been bolstered to hold tight under repeated blows. An eyebolt now holds the mounting bracket more rigidly than ever. List price is $64.

(888) LP-MUSIC, www.lpmusic.com.

Marimbas On The March

Musser Moto-Cart Frames For Concert Marimbas

Musser Classic Grand marimbas are now available with durable steel Moto-Cart frames, making the concert instruments suitable for outdoor use. Models are available in 4.3- and 4.5-octave versions. Their Kelon bars are known for their rich, classic sound. High-grade aluminum alloy resonators amplify the sound. They're finished in classic silver-vein powder coating.

The new steel Moto-Cart frames are height-adjustable and have 8" pneumatic wheels with brakes, making transportation over unleveled surfaces easy and smooth. The frames are made from heavy-gauge steel and are finished in a durable matte black finish. The wheels also telescope for optimal balance under the extra weight of additional racks and other accessories.

Www.conn-selmer.com.

Now THAT's A Vintage Drum!

Stanbridge Snare Drums Made Of 50,000-Year-Old Wood

Stanbridge Drum Company of Newfoundland, Canada is currently making snare drums from ancient kauri—the oldest known workable timber in the world. The wood is taken from mammoth logs that had rested in a peat swamp in New Zealand through the last Ice Age until they were unearthed and identified in 1987. Scientific dating has proven that these kauri trees grew during a period from 30,000 to more than 50,000 years ago.

The segment-shell construction and low fundamental frequency of ancient kauri wood contribute to a warm tone with rich and controlled resonance. The wood itself is a deep golden color, with textures and sheens that shimmer and dance under differing light conditions. Each drum features a gloss or satin lacquer finish, Corder handmade brass tube lugs, hardwood hoops in bubinga or pau ferro wood, a choice of Nickel, Trick, or Millenium strainer systems, Puresound or Canopus snare wires, a choice of hardware finish and heads, a signed and numbered tag on the inside, a certificate of authenticity, and a radiocarbon dating certificate.

Only twenty-five ancient kauri snare drums will be produced. Six will be 5½x13, at $1,425; twelve will be 5½x14, at $1,475; and seven will be 6½x14, at $1,525 (all plus shipping and taxes).

(709) 437-7258, www.stanbridgedrums.com.

We're Still Playing Hollow Logs

LuKa Percussion Solid-Shell Djembes

LuKa Percussion's line of solid, seamless ash djembes is built the traditional way: Whole ash logs are hollowed into lightweight, solid, seamless wooden bodies. Roped models feature high-grade mountain-climbing rope, which is strong and durable, and has nearly no elasticity. They feature hand-selected Canadian goatskin, which, combined with the climbing rope, results in consistent, long-lasting tuning.

Other models feature a hook tuning system. The lugs, rims, and hooks are all handmade. The hook djembe permits quick tuning, easier head changes, and a much more resonant body, with more projection and louder overtone.

LuKa djembes are lightweight and decorative. They come in various blue, green, orange, burgundy, and natural high-gloss finishes. A handle makes them easy to carry around.

(514) 295-1981, www.lukapercussion.com.

The Reference Shelf

Musical Expression On The Drum Set (DVD)
Jack DeJohnette
(Homespun Video)

This is a DVD re-release of Jack DeJohnette's 1992 instructional video. It offers Jack's musical concepts, technical tips, and personal performances. Fellow drummer Harvey Sorgen poses questions, while the cameras provide multiple views of Jack's demonstrations. List price is $29.95.
(845) 246-2550, www.homespuntapes.com.

The Rhythmic Construction Of Dance, Pop, R&B, And Hip-Hop (DVD)
Bashiri Johnson
(Latin Percussion)

Master percussionist Bashiri Johnson explores the role of congas, bongos, shakers, tambourines, repiques, chimes, bells, blocks, and found objects in popular music styles. The focus is on incorporating Latin instruments in non-traditional environments. A play-along section allows the listener to join with the band, replacing Bashiri as the percussionist. List price is $19.95.
(973) 478-6903, www.lpmusic.com.

Natural Drumming Lessons 1 & 2 (DVD)
Joe Morello and Danny Gottlieb **(Mel Bay)**

Natural Drumming is a technical approach that promotes natural body movement without tension. In Lesson 1, master drummers Morello and Gottlieb first demonstrate basic hand positions, basic hand motions, and wrist turns. Lesson 2 covers balance (where you hold the stick and why), the mechanics of stick motion, and the full stroke. Solos from both drummers are featured. List price is $24.95.
(636) 257-3970, www.melbay.com.

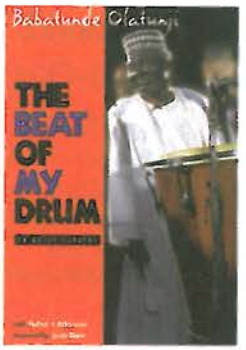
FUNdamental Fitness: Playground Exercises For Grownups
by Jen Hoeft
(Read Publishing)

Frequent *MD Health & Science* contributor Jen Hoeft is a working drummer and a fitness trainer. Although this book isn't drummer-specific, it does present a collection of exercises and workouts that can be used at home or on the road to help keep any drummer in good shape. A light-hearted approach is used throughout, making the programs fun to follow. List price is $19.95.
(615) 383-1112, www.jenhoeft.com.

The Beat Of My Drum: An Autobiography
by Babatunde Olatunji with Robert Atkinson **(Temple University Press)**

Through his many albums and live performances, Nigerian master drummer Babatunde Olatunji popularized West African traditional music and spread his message of racial harmony. In this posthumous memoir, Olatunji presents his life story, as well as the philosophy that guided him to create his seminal album, *Drums Of Passion*.

Olatunji influenced musicians for more than forty years, including Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, Carlos Santana, and John Coltrane. He writes about rhythm being "the soul of life," and about the healing power of the drum. *The Beat Of My Drum* shows why, at the time of his death in 2003, Olatunji had become (according to *The New York Times*) "the most visible African musician in the United States." List price is $23.95.



(800) 621-2736, www.temple.edu/tempress.

Mike Portnoy Progressive Drum Concepts (DVD)
(Rittor Music/Hal Leonard Publishing)

This 1996 video from prog icon Mike Portnoy has been reissued on DVD. It features bassist John Myung and keyboardist Derek Sherinian, helping Mike on several early Dream Theater tunes. A booklet with exercises and transcriptions is included. List price is $24.95.
(414) 774-3630, www.halleonard.com.

Play Timbales Now: The Basics & Beyond
by Richie Gajate-Garcia **(Warner Bros.)**

This book covers traditional and contemporary timbale patterns, as well as patterns for cowbell, cascara, and cymbal. Tuning and maintenance, basic reading and notation, and patterns for school music ensembles are also included. The book comes with two CDs of audio examples and play-along tracks. List price is $24.99.
(800) 327-7643, www.warnerbrospublications.com.

The Drum Along Drum Circle Video
(Warner Bros.)

This program presents a 30-person drum circle in 360° vision and sound. Four featured players lead the different drumming parts of the group rhythms. Their entrances into the drum circle are staggered so that the viewer has time to look and listen to each of their parts. The rhythms played include doudoumbe (an upbeat African rhythm), fanga (a mid-tempo African rhythm), rhumba (a clave-oriented Cuban rhythm), kakilambe (an upbeat African rhythm), heartbeat (a soothing multicultural rhythm), and shika (a modern fusion of African and Caribbean rhythms). Each rhythm includes on-screen, easy-to-read box notation. For all skill levels. List price is $24.95.
(800) 327-7643, www.warnerbrospublications.com.

Classic Titles On DVD
(Warner Bros.)

Warner Bros. has released several classic instructional videos in DVD format. These include Ed Thigpen's *The Essence Of Brushes* ($24.95), Joe Franco's *Double Bass Drumming* ($29.95), *Steve Smith* Parts 1 and 2 ($29.95 each), and the *Ultimate Beginner Series* featuring Tom Brechtlein ($19.99).
(800) 327-7643, www.warnerbrospublications.com.

Wanna Jam With Some Friends?

Schulmerich MelodyWave Instruments

Schulmerich's new MelodyWave Instruments are designed to turn MIDI—normally the province of a single instrument with a single player—into a group experience. A classroom can become an orchestra. An orchestra can become a rock band. A percussion section can take on complex melodies.

Each set of MelodyWave Instruments includes either 13, 25, 37, or 49 hand-playable batons, a charger, and a rack-mountable wireless base station. The base station plugs into any MIDI tone generator, giving access to all 256 voices of the MIDI 2 standard. Although sound quality is ultimately dependent upon the user's MIDI and amplification setup, the MelodyWave Instrument's touch-sensitive batons and straightforward interface provide full control over expression and dynamics.

Www.melodywave.net.

Who Says Drummers Can't Play Scales?

RockenWraps Reptile Series Custom Drum Coverings

RockenWraps drum coverings—designed and manufactured by Queensrÿche drummer and Grammy-nominated composer Scott Rockenfield—now include a Reptile series. The wraps are rendered in high-resolution digital graphics and layered until they are as vivid as possible, then printed using a special process that seals and secures the 17-mil wraps for durability and shine.

RockenWraps are self-adhesive coverings designed to be applied over existing shells. The wraps are scratch-resistant, waterproof, flexible, and interchangeable, and can be easily cleaned and polished to a high luster. They are available in over a hundred designs with standard single bass or double bass–kit sizes, single add-ons, and custom options. List price for a five-piece single-bass kit (18x24 bass drum, 10x12, 14x15, and 16x18 toms, and 6½x14 snare drum) is $399.

Www.rockenwraps.com.

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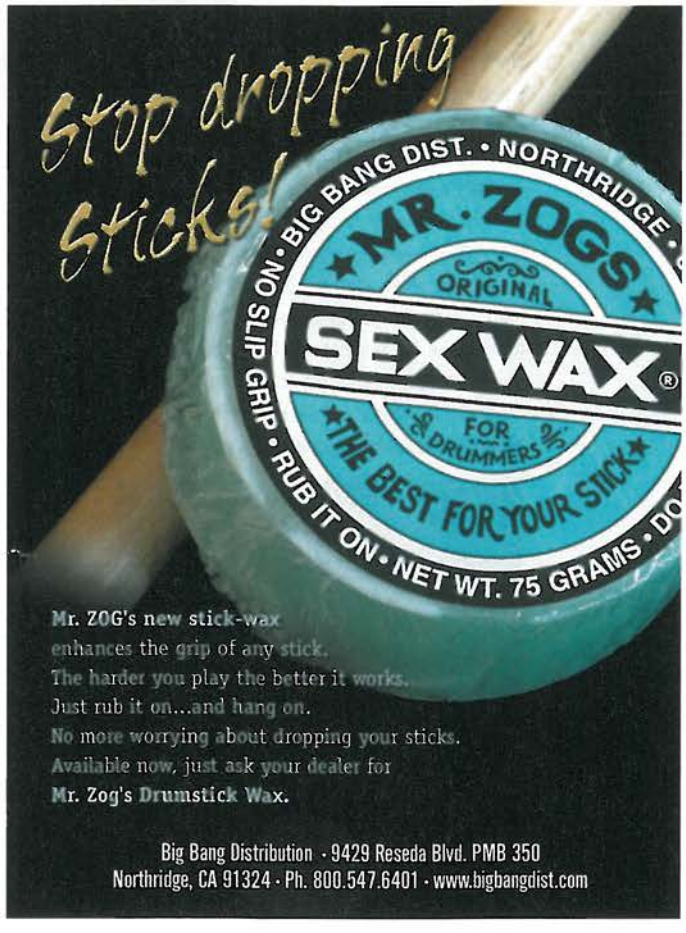

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And What's More

BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION is now distributing the **BOSPHORUS** line of hand-made Turkish cymbals. From the earthy, unlathed Turk series to the polished, cutting Gold series, to the new Stanton Moore Signature series, every cymbal is crafted and hammered by master cymbalsmiths. Each cymbal comes hand-marked with the smith's signature and the weight of the cymbal.
(800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com.

PRO-MARK and well-known pit instructor/arranger Catherine Float have teamed to create new Catherine Float Performer Series mallets. The line consists of seven models built with slightly thinner rattan shafts with a special non-slip coating for improved grip and control. The mallets have been designed for crossover use on vibraphone, xylophone, and marimba. Two of the seven mallet designs are considered "two-tone," for players seeking multiple tonalities without the need to switch to a different mallet. List price is $47.95 per pair, with the two-tone models priced at $49.95.
(713) 314-1100, www.promark.com.

The **PHAT FOOT** is a harness system that connects the feet of a drummer's throne to bass drum and hi-hat pedals to prevent slippage. Made of lightweight nylon and only 18" long, the Phat Foot travels easily in any hardware bag or trap case. List price is $29.99.
(800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com.

S-HOOPS are triple-flanged hoops with an elongated inward beveled flange. This provides an overlying edge that covers the bearing edge of the drum, increasing hoop strength. The added steel makes the hoop more rigid, and provides a smoother playing surface for rimshots and rimclicks. The hoops are said to incorporate the acoustic elements of traditional rolled-steel and die-cast rims.
(800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com.

LUDWIG has released its first expanded Accent CS drum outfit catalog. This twelve-page full-color catalog includes all of the newest Ludwig Accent CS outfits, component drums, snare drums, and hardware. The Accent CS line is said to offer exceptional value and extensive options for entry-level drums.
Www.conn-selmer.com.

New timbales from **CODA PERCUSSION** feature metal shells with chrome finishes, a black cowbell made from premium steel, and an adjustable double-braced stand with sturdy rubber feet. The timbales are available in four sets of shell sizes: 14" and 15", 13" and 14", 10" and 11" (timbalitos), and 6" and 8" (mini timbales).

CODA timbales are said to have a classic design and a loud, deep, expressive tone. The timbalitos and mini timbales feature loud high end to contribute to any rhythm section. CODA timbales list from $79.95 to $139.95.
(415) 570-0970, www.codadrums.com.

XL SPECIALTY PERCUSSION has redesigned their Protechtor series 4302E Economy cymbal case and PE302 Deluxe cymbal case. The new versions are said to feature cleaner lines and a better fit. The cases are designed to offer superb protection to cymbals up to 22" in diameter. The Economy model lists for $102. The Deluxe model adds wheels and a folding handle for easy transportation, and lists for $145.
(260) 627-8070, www.xlspec.com.

New iMake Sheet Music 3.0 from **MIDISOFT** lets users create, print, and share music and scores easily and affordably. In addition, the software has the capability to "read" incoming real-time performances (on electronic drums or other MIDI instruments) and turn those performances into accurate percussion scores.

The software turns any PC into a music studio. It has everything needed to create music in one package: Notation, Sequencing, Transpose, Drag & Drop Edit, Digital Audio, and many more features like MP3, Wave, and Windows Media formatting with CD burning capability. It even includes a bonus CD covering music theory and appreciation. List price is $79.
(888) 433-4685, www.midisoft.com.

2005 Undiscovered Drummer Contest

Eighteen-and-under Division Winner Elóy Casagrande

Fourteen-year-old Elóy Casagrande of Sao Paulo, Brazil began his musical life with a familiar story. At the age of six, he was drawn to musical toys and quickly began banging out rhythms on anything he could find. Within a year, his parents bought him a "real" drum and he began taking lessons. From there, the story becomes anything but ordinary.

In only seven years' time, Elóy's impressive talents have gained him exposure throughout his South American homeland, including appearances on several prominent Brazilian television programs. On a program for the network Rede Globo, Elóy placed first in a national talent contest, which led to a stream of appearances on various children's shows and pop entertainment broadcasts. From such exposure, Elóy has been invited to perform at various workshops and music fairs throughout Brazil.

This past November, the young drummer came out on top of another national contest, winning the thirteen-and-under division at the BATUKA International Drum Fest in Sao Paulo, Brazil. At that festival, previous contest winner Gustavo Meli urged Elóy to enter the *Modern Drummer* Undiscovered Drummer Contest.

Combining influences from his mentor Aquiles Priester and drumming heavyweights Deen Castronovo, Virgil Donati, Thomas Lang, Vera Figueiredo, Neil Peart, and Jeff Porcaro (plus a touch of traditional Brazilian flavor), Elóy's winning entry showcased abilities far beyond that of the average teen. His super-quick technique, fluid motions, and strong musical instincts stood out among the crowd of highly skilled competitors to make Elóy Casagrande our 2005 eighteen-and-under Undiscovered Drummer.

With such a promising future ahead, Elóy expresses his goals this way: "I have an objective to learn more and more. And through my presentations, I hope to expose more children and teenagers to music because music not only brings love, peace, and happiness, but it can also be a great profession."

Over-Eighteen Division Winner Jon Willis

Jon Willis took enough time out of his busy schedule at the University of Southern California to put together a very impressive entry tape, earning him the win in the over-eighteen division. The twenty-year-old drummer from Santa Barbara, California is currently enrolled in the jazz studies program at USC, where he studies privately with modern jazz giant Terri Lyne Carrington.

Blending the influence of drum gods Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, and Dennis Chambers with groove masters Ahmir "?uestlove" Thompson, Carter Beauford, and Gorden Campbell, Jon's drumming style strikes a fine balance between technique, feel, and the x-factor—confidence. "One thing I try to live by every day is to keep your individuality and not let people bring you down," says the drummer. "It's all about confidence." In fact, Jon began his two-minute video with a rather bold statement: "My name is Jon Willis, and I'm here to win."

From there, the drummer backed up his prediction with an excellent performance that combined adventurous chops and funky grooves with a great sense of space, structure, and pacing.

In addition to his studies at USC, Jon drums at church and plays in a variety of funk, rock, and jazz groups. He also maintains a private teaching practice of over a dozen students.

Currently, Jon plays DW Collector's Series drums, DW 9000 Series hardware, and Zildjian cymbals. As for his goals, John states, "My dream is being in a back-up band for a big pop act, as well as doing clinics and solo projects."

Honorable Mention

This year's Undiscovered Drummer Contest was packed with an exceptional range of talent. Choosing the winners was not easy. In addition to Elóy and Jon, a number of entrants deserve to be recognized. In the eighteen-and-under division, honorable mention goes to David Cifelli of Stockton, New Jersey, Steve Renko of Euclid, Ohio, and Mark Banner of Los Angeles, California. Noteworthy entrants in the over-eighteen division include Pascal LePage of Quebec, Canada, Fernando Mendoza of Morelia, Mexico, and Joe Babiak of Arlington Heights, Illinois.

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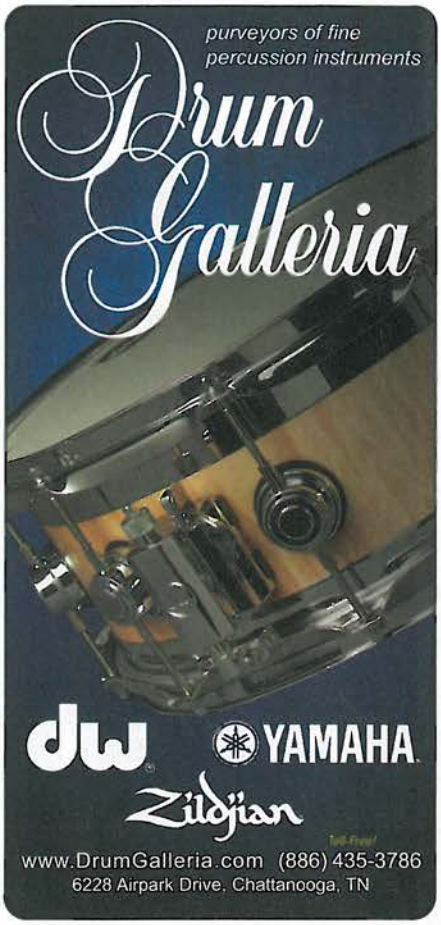
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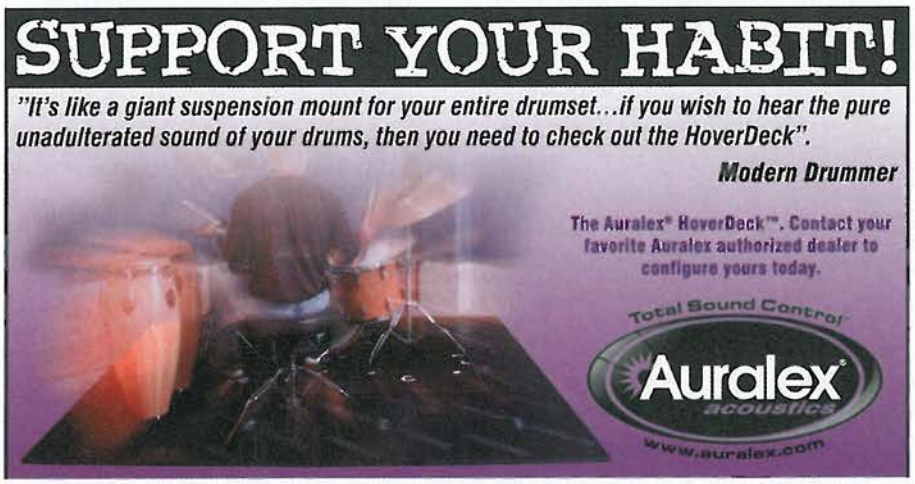
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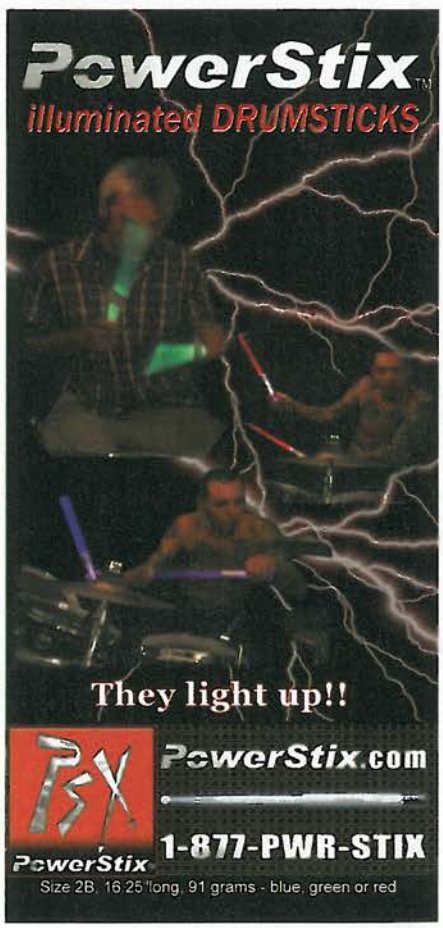
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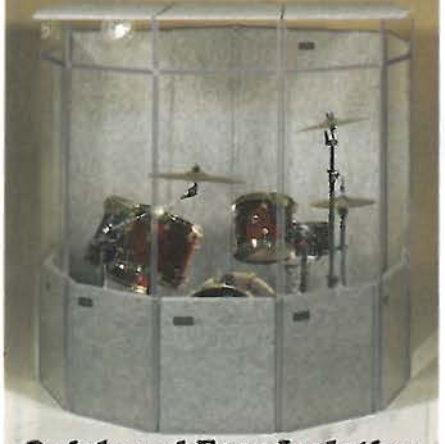

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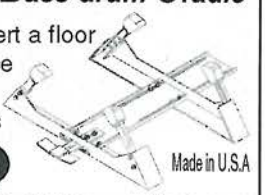

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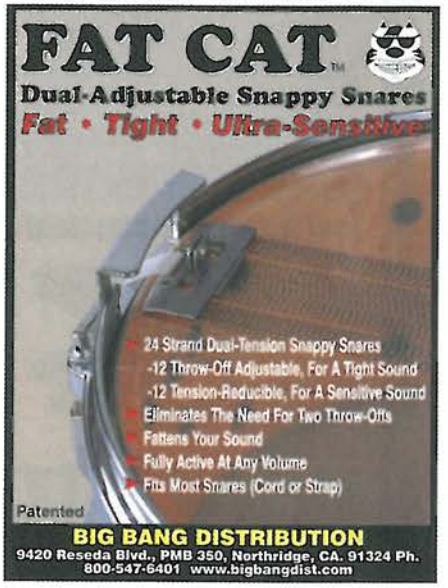

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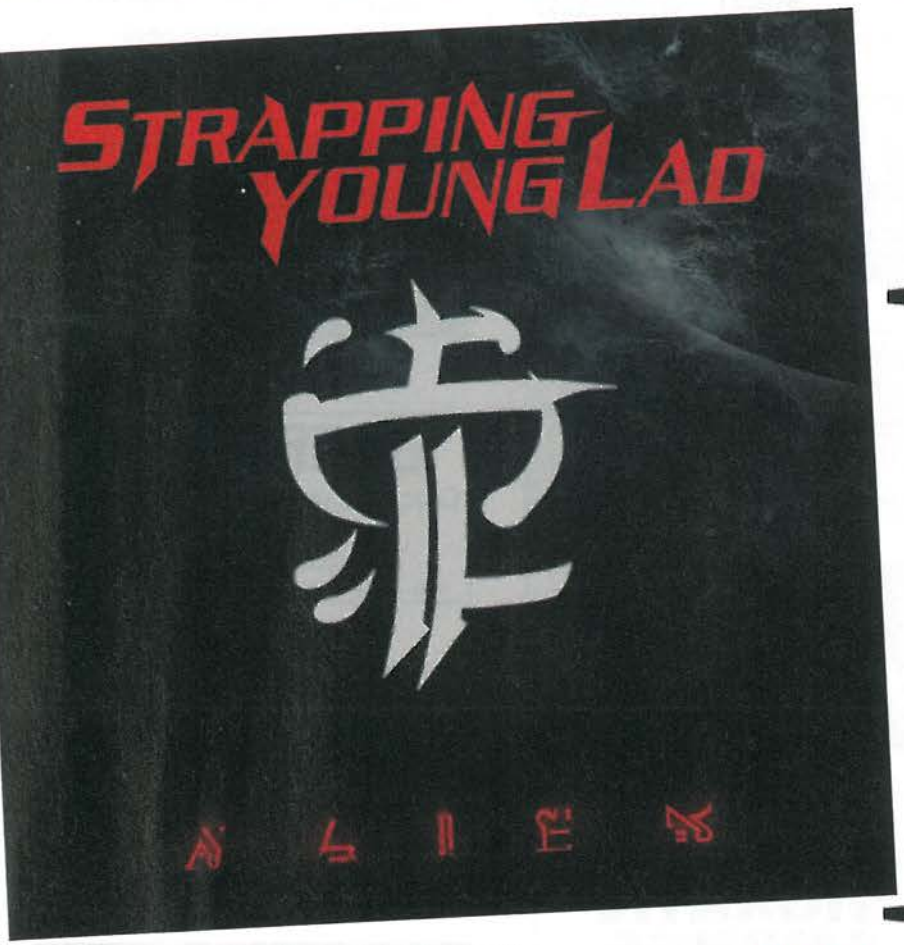

Strapping Young Lad Alien (Century Media)

It apparently took **GENE HOGLAN** only three days to pound through *Alien*. That's hard to imagine, considering how creative and colossal his drumming is on this album. Once again, the Canada-based lads blend monstrous power with hearty helpings of beauty and quirk to achieve their apocalyptic metal. Frontman/guitarist **Devin Townsend** delivers his signature madness throughout, but to concoct *Alien*, the quartet wrote together for the first time. They nailed it. Hoglan opens "Shitstorm" with a vicious mini-solo before trampling carefully within a crazed onslaught of futuristic fury. And the drummer offers super-tuneful chops on the swaggering, buoyant "We Ride" and the galloping "Love?" Yep, you'll love *Alien*.

Jeff Perlah

Yellowjackets

Altered State (Heads Up)

Drummer **MARCUS BAYLOR** seems to have reinvigorated the 'Jackets, because *Altered State* is one of the band's most adventurous outings in years. Showing remarkable intensity and attention to musical detail, Baylor perfectly augments and stimulates the classy musical whims of **Russell Ferrante**, **Bob Mintzer**, and **Jimmy Haslip**. Baylor is super-dynamic, darting in and around piano solos, leaving space for a staccato bass run, and answering sax lines with a crisp, splashy hi-hat. Baylor gets to show off his wide range on the odd-time journey "Suite 15," the second-line funk of "March Majestic," and his own Zawinul-esque composition, "Free Day."

Robin Tolleson

Jack DeJohnette & Foday Musa Suso

Music From The Hearts Of The Masters (Golden Beams/Kindred Rhythm)

This duet recording between DeJohnette and West African Mandingo griot Foday Musa Suso is a lithe storytelling journey, like walking with two ancient sages as they trade tales and memories. Musa Suso offers the arching melodic counterpoint to DeJohnette's resonant drums and zinging bells, the griot's evocative instruments including kora, kalimba, kutiro, shekere, balafon, dundungo, and dousongoni. The pair explores a range of call & response conversations, from the throbbing pulse of "Ancient Techno" to the myriad percussive colors of "Mountain Love Dance." A picturesque, jungle village feeling permeates the music, like a glimpse into a lost world.

Ken Micallef

Extreme Beats by Jeff Perlah

High On Fire, Agnostic Front, Quo Vadis

It was one thing to front the famed stoner-metal band Sleep, but with his current outfit, High On Fire, guitarist/vocalist **Matt Pike** has virtually redefined "heavy." On the trio's third album, *Blessed Black Wings*, beautifully thunderous guitar riffs and galloping bass lines billow like the demonic wings pictured on the cover. Meanwhile, **DES KENSEL**'s huge, out-front toms, Big Foot kick, and tribal nuances are a wonder to behold. (Relapse)

New York City hardcore legends Agnostic Front shed plenty of sonic blood on their latest slab, *Another Voice*. Raging anthems like "Dedication" and the nostalgic "Take Me Back" reveal **STEVE GALLO**'s muscular and efficient drumming. Production by Zeuss and Hatebreed's Jamey Jasta (who also roars on a track) further ensures that *Another Voice* isn't just another generic-sounding reason to mosh. (Nuclear Blast)

With their galloping epic-metal, growling death-metal vocals, and artful prog-rock (complete with cello, piano, and a full choir), Montreal's Quo Vadis certainly avoids limiting themselves on *Defiant Imagination*, their fourth full-length. Yet the multifarious approach doesn't detract from a signature sound. And one thing is unmistakable: the dynamic, powerhouse drumming of **YANIC BERCIER**. This guy can *play*, as his blinding chop infestations and shifting time signatures on "In Contempt" and "To The Bitter End" demonstrate. (www.quovadis.qc.ca)

Kevin Norton's Bauhaus Quartet

Time-Space Modulator (Barking Hoop) ♦♦♦♦

Drummer/composer **KEVIN NORTON**'s quartet is in their element on this live recording. The sax/ trumpet/bass/drums lineup often blows fast and edgy, where Norton's drumming is propulsive, driving things forward in a flurry of motion. At other times, the music is more introspective and spacious, as on "Seoul Soul," where Norton plays vibes. Back on kit, he lays down a serious groove in six on "Didkovsky," while swinging with brushes on "Milt's Forward Looking Tradition." Thoughtful and creative, Norton's music deserves a serious listen. (www.kevinnorton.com) **Michael Bettine**

Corrosion Of Conformity

In The Arms Of God (Sanctuary) ♦♦♦♦

Galactic's **STANTON MOORE** has a surprising side gig: swamp-metal legends Corrosion Of Conformity. The funk ace actually adds brawn to COC, helping to make this record more roaring and gritty than their last studio album, *America's Volume Dealer*. On "Stone Breaker," Moore's huge chops lock with intimidating riffs and **Pepper Keenan**'s ballsy vocals. Later the drummer gets evil with a booming kick and well-placed fills on the sludgy "It Is That Way." His tribal touch, meanwhile, is right at home on the maniacal "War" and the bluesy/psychedelic "So Much Left Behind." COC are in good *Arms* with Moore. **Jeff Perlah**

Bill Stewart Trio

Keynote Speakers (Bill Stewart Music) ♦♦♦♦

Exploring an unusual format of drums plus two keyboards, **BILL STEWART's** latest outing as leader/composer is strange, swinging, funky, and deep into très-hip territory. **Larry Goldings** (Hammond, assorted keys) and **Kevin Hays** (piano, assorted keys) are of one mind, finishing sentences like twins. The sparse format affords ample space for passionate kit interplay. Stewart's a rare drummer who combines the best of both worlds: His execution is exacting and crisp, yet the overall phrasing remains fluid and loose. And the ideas just keep coming. This "limited" format surprises with an astonishing variety of colors. Quirky and relentlessly inventive. (www.cdbaby.com) **Jeff Potter**

Proggin'

Billy Sheehan, Snelwar/Manring/Zonder, Powernut

by Mike Haid

Drummer **RAY LUZIER** (David Lee Roth) drives legendary rock bassist Billy Sheehan's catchy progressive pop album *Cosmic Troubadour* with commanding precision. This project is the perfect vehicle to show the up-and-coming Luzier's exceptional talents. (Favored Nations)

Many all-star trio projects fall short of expectations. Not this time. There are many moods, dynamics, emotions, and thoughtful arrangements to be found in the instrumental soundscapes of *At War With Self* by Snelwar/Manring/Zonder. Former Fates Warning drummer **MARK ZONDER** shows his compositional excellence throughout, creating subtle textures and moods that allow the music to bend, breath, and flow naturally. (www.glennsnelwar.com)

Though all the parts are in place on Powernut's well-recorded instrumental progressive pop-rock album *3 Nuts In A Pocket*, the disc is too polite and structured to be convincingly improvisational, and there's a lack of compositional depth. Still, drummer **RUSS MILLER**'s solid time, sense of authority, and highly developed technique make this disc, despite its shortcomings, interesting for drummers. (www.russmiller.com)

John Zorn's Masada

Live At Tonic, September 18, 2003 (Tzadik) ♦♦♦♦½

Like a fine 1955 Bordeaux, **JOEY BARON** only gets better with age. On this impeccably recorded 2003 live concert, Baron's mischievous and inventive drumming continues to push and pull the quartet's tricky, Eastern European odd-time changes with deft tom-tom mallet work and incredibly slinky, melodically locked-in solos using brushes, sticks, and even his bare hands. On the twelve-minute, show-stopping "Piram," the breathtaking sparring match between altoist Zorn and company is telepathically sensitive yet swings so brutally hard, you realize exactly what Joey Baron has been for three decades: one of jazz's best-kept secrets. **Ilya Stemkovsky**

Machine And The Synergetic Nuts

Leap Second Neutral (Cuneiform) ♦♦♦

This Japanese quartet possesses the quirkiness of a classic Canterbury prog rock band and the dynamics of '70s Weather Report. This mutant combination is a potential minefield for any drummer. Fortunately, nimble-limbed bandleader **TOSHIAKI SUDOH** steers clear of disaster. No matter how jagged the tune ("Neutral" shifts into every mode *but* its namesake), Sudoh's funky feel stretches across odd and even meters with wit and agility. If you dig the European progressive bands that straddled the lines between compositional rock and jazz fusion, such as Soft Machine and National Health, you'll love these twisting shafts of sound. **Will Romano**

Sakésho We Want You To Say (Heads Up) ♦♦♦

Light and quick on his feet, drummer **JEAN PHILLIPPE FANFANT** powers Sakésho with authority and grace. His accompaniment to **Mario Canonge**'s piano solo on "Ewa Belia" is like Steve Gadd by way of Horacio Hernandez. Ever playful and fearless in the 6/8, Fanfant turns things inside out and punctuates with a Tony Williams–like flam fill. Meanwhile, he gently backs steel pan–man **Andy Narell**'s "One More Touch" with brushes, and turns up the funk on bassist **Michel Alibo**'s "We Want You To Say," playfully and somehow unobtrusively creating his own barlines to jump. **Robin Tolleson**

Porcupine Tree Deadwing (Lava) ♦♦♦½

While Porcupine Tree undeniably conjures Genesis, Floyd, Tool, and Radiohead on this *concept* record, the band never sinks to neo-prog trappings. Simply put, it's perhaps PT's most cohesive effort, thanks largely to chief songwriter Steven Wilson. Following suit, **GAVIN HARRISON**'s uncluttered playing is slinky and economical. Check out his smooth grooves in "The Start Of Something Beautiful" and "Halo," for instance. Though Harrison participated in a game of percussive Twister on past efforts, he wisely serves these beautiful tracks with rhythmic elegance, *not* unbridled technique. **Will Romano**

Tomo Music Of Reed Kotler (Torii) ♦♦♦

Tomo is a jazz quintet that includes **Bob Sheppard** (sax), **Bill Cunliffe** (piano), and drummer **MARK FERBER**. Here they focus on the music of jazz composer Reed Kotler, who writes in an attractive post-bop style. Ferber is effective throughout, playing to the music, prodding here and there, and adding color and subtle cross-rhythms. Bossa novas, ballads, and up-tempo swing tracks all reveal his comping skills, while his solo on "In A Restful Place" shows taste and musicality. With catchy heads, a good variety of feels and tempos, and first-rate playing, this CD is an enjoyable listen. (www.toriirecords.com) **Martin Patmos**

Of Further Interest

JIMI BOTT's *Live Volume 1: Cheap Thrills* features tracks the drummer played with The Fabulous Thunderbirds, Kim Wilson, and Rod Piazza, among others. (www.jimibott.com)

Hot drummers **VICTOR INDRIZZO** and **JAY BELLEROSE** are on Aimee Mann's latest, a concept album called *The Forgotten Arm.* (SuperEgo)

Three of jazz/fusion drummer **LES DEMERLE**'s early albums, *Transfusion*, *Spectrum*, and *Live At Concerts By The Sea*, have recently been reissued on CD. (P-Vine, www.amazon.com)

BOOKS

Relating Sound And Time by Jerry Leake (Rhombus)

level: intermediate to advanced, $50 (with two CDs)

This is a monumental work! The first half of this book deals with Mr. Leake's philosophy of life and how it relates to his ongoing musical journey, while the second half is a transcribed culmination of his time living and studying in West Africa and India. *Relating Sound And Time* seems to be a condensed version of a few of Mr. Leake's previous books, and it's published in a smaller yet "thicker" format, making it "the essential handbook." Two accompanying CDs correspond to the notated second half of the book and clearly define all the rhythmic components and vocalizations of the many beats. Mr. Leake conveys the essence of his studies when speaking of the importance of instrument tuning in Indian music, and getting to the "heart of your drum," a relaxed yet focused inner approach to African drumming. Above all, I was impressed with the short chapter on strategic breathing; more natural breath intake is suggested for general well-being and ultimately a better musical performance. (www.rhombuspublishing.com)

David Licht

Different Brush Beats: Rhythms And Sounds On The Drum Set by Phil Zampino Sr. (PAZ)

level: all, $11.50

It's been observed that the use of brushes is becoming a lost art. For the next generation of drumset players, and for those who are in need of a refresher, *Different Brush Beats* is a must. The book contains clear directions on basic brush technique and fourteen brush beats. Each beat is matched to a song from a CD (purchased separately), ideal for learning when a particular brush beat should be used. Especially helpful for students, the hand positions for each brush beat are explained by visualizing the snare drum as a clock face: "The left hand moves clockwise at 11:00 and the right hand moves counter-clockwise at 1:00." A final handy feature is a list of terms. (www.PAZPublishing.com)

Doug Wurst

DVDs

Musical Time: A Step-By-Step Approach To Playing Musical Time In A Jazz Rhythm Section by Ed Soph (Carl Fischer)

level: intermediate to advanced, $19.95

Respected veteran instructor/performer Ed Soph reveals his fundamental approach for developing solid swing time. The well-spoken Soph is very specific in detailing the proper steps leading to a relaxed and dynamic technique. Topics include sensible set-up, hand and foot techniques, appropriate spacing of notes, dynamics, comping, and playing musically with a trio. The clearly structured production allows Soph to incorporate the piano and bass trio into each example for a look at his philosophy in action. The DVD topics are also covered in depth in the highly recommended *Musical Time* book and CD package (sold separately). This world-class instructional is well worth the price.

Mike Haid

Musical Drumming In Different Styles

by Gregg Bissonette (Hudson)

level: intermediate to advanced, $49.95 (two discs)

Veteran LA session drummer Gregg Bissonette offers tons of practical advice on becoming a well-rounded, musical player on this DVD, sharing his priceless experiences with some of the great drummers of our time, like Tony Williams, Ringo Starr, and Louie Bellson. Many important drumming-related topics are covered in this four-plus-hour double disc set, with Bissonette discussing the influences and demonstrating the playing techniques of several of his musically diverse compositions. The overall production is excellent, the dialog is entertaining, the audio is superb, and many camera angles are used.

Mike Haid

MULTI-MEDIA

Alfred's Beginning Drumset Method

by Sandy Feldstein and Dave Black (Alfred)

level: beginner to intermediate, $19.95 (book with DVD)

There are many beginner books, but few as concise, condensed, and comprehensive as the one in this package. Not to be outdone, the high-quality production of the DVD allows organized integration with each section of the book. Drumset description, positioning, and proper playing techniques lead into basic reading skills. From there it's on to reading quarter-, 8th-, and 16th-note rock beat variations. Various fill ideas are added, moving into jazz drumming and sight reading (play-along) charts. Both book and DVD indicate track numbers for each example, allowing the reader to easily follow most examples on-screen. The instructor moves quickly through each section (two bars per example), with brief explanations of the increasingly difficult patterns of rock and jazz. This reasonably priced package contains everything a beginner needs to get started and develop a well-rounded knowledge and understanding for playing the drumset in basic rock and jazz styles.

Mike Haid

Taking The Reins

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Hal Howland, *10 Years In 5 Days*, www.halhowland.com
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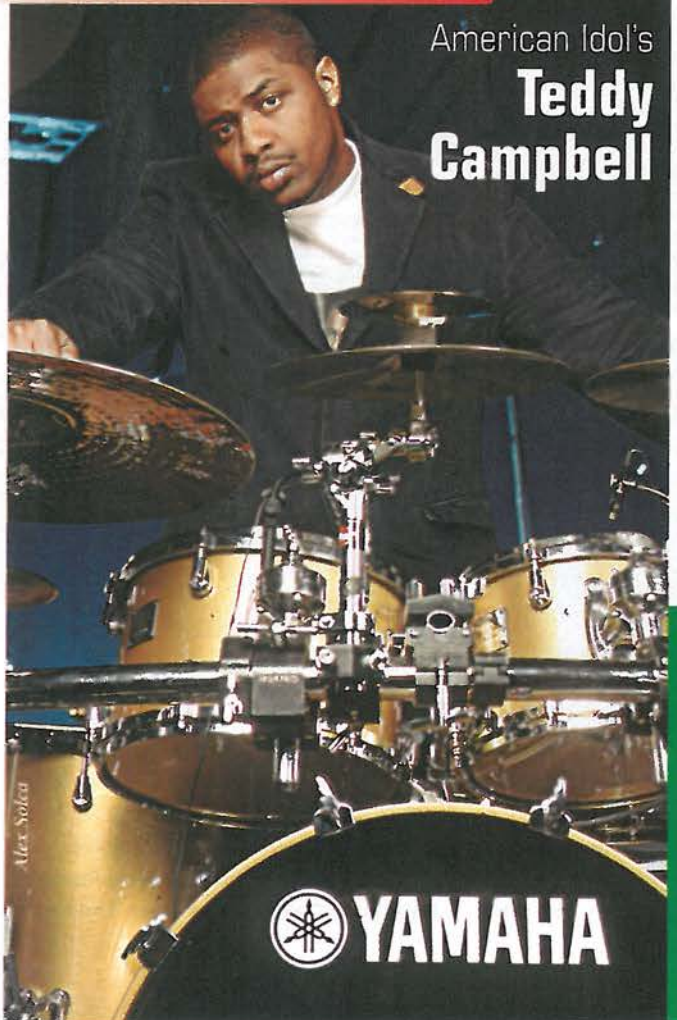

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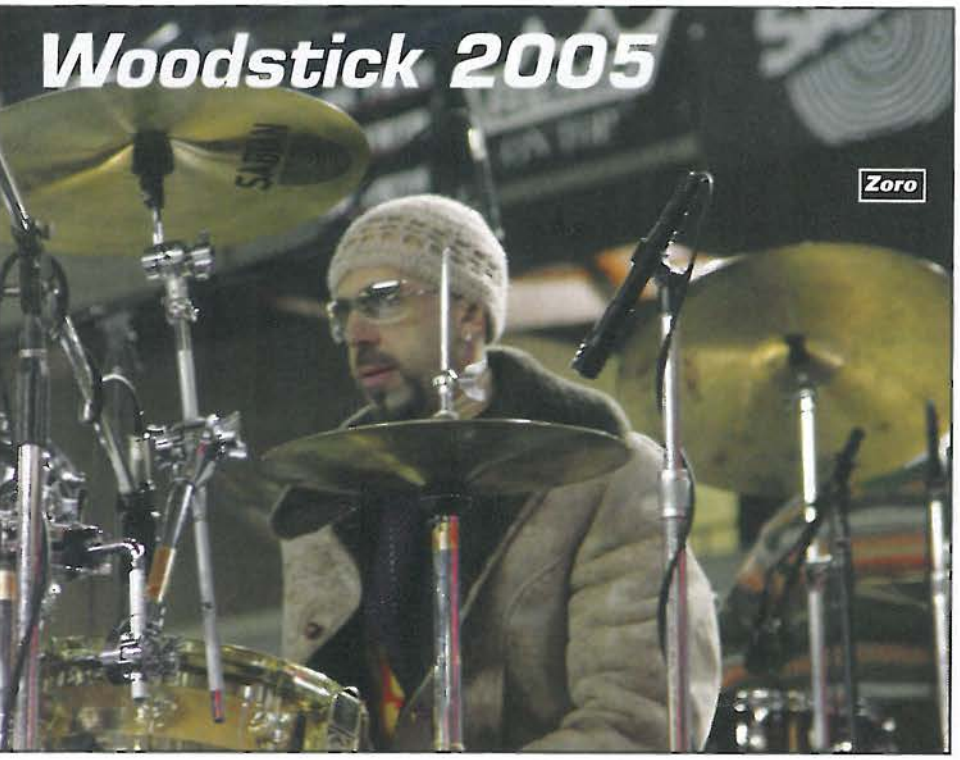
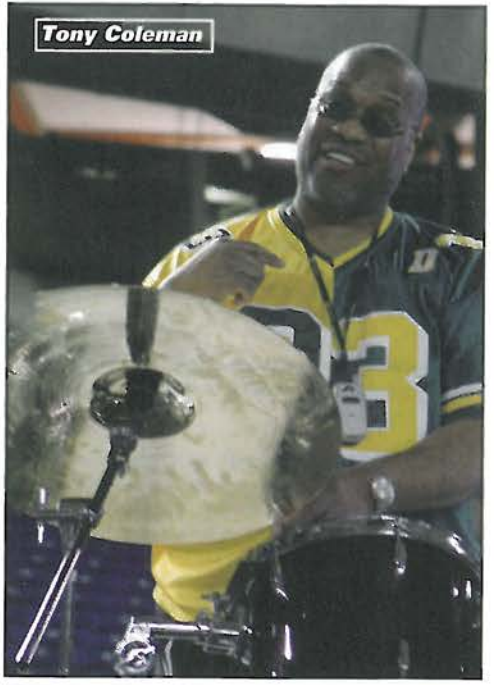
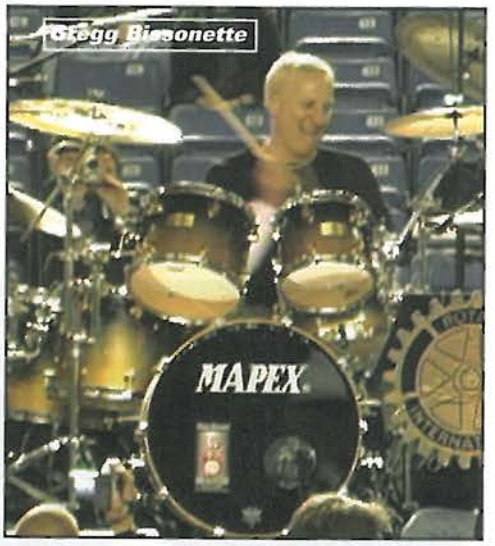
Web Exclusive!

Ringo Starr & Mark Hudson

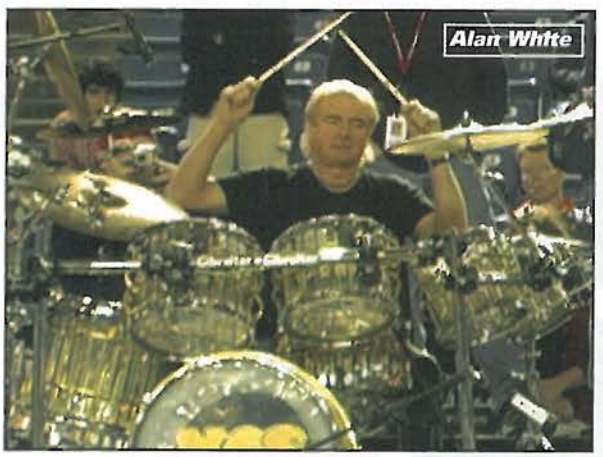
Woodstick 2005







Drummers of all ages and abilities joined in the Tacoma Dome in Tacoma, Washington this past February 21 for Woodstick 2005. For the third year in a row, the event attempted to break the record for the most drummers playing drumsets at the same time. The mass of participants covered almost the entire floor of the dome, but fell 25 drummers short of breaking the record of 502 set last year. Even so, the event raised more than $20,000 for local public school music programs.



Celebrity drummers participating included **Bernard Purdie** (studio great), **Michael Shrieve** (ex-Santana), **Michael Derosier** (ex-Heart), **Alan White** (Yes), **Zoro** (Lenny Kravitz), **Gregg Bissonette**, **Ricky Lynn Johnson** (The Wailers), **Jeff Kathan** (Paul Rodgers), **Tony Coleman** (B.B. King), and **Jason Finn** (The Presidents Of The United States Of America).

While celebrity drummers performed on a stage, drummers like seven-year-old Jacob Delgado packed the floor of the dome. Delgado, who was accompanied to Woodstick by his drum teacher Jud Sherwood, said his favorite part of the afternoon was "the last one, where everyone was drumming." Jacob was referring to the six minutes in which maestro Harvey Felder of the Tacoma Symphony Orchestra conducted the assembled drummers in playing a four-bar rock beat. Participants also had the chance to trade fours with celebrity drummers, and to play several tunes—including "Wipe Out"—with The Wailers.

Woodstick 2005 was sponsored by the Tacoma Rotary Club and by Donn Bennett Drum Studio in Bellevue, Washington. For more information visit www.bennettdrums.com.

Story by Chris Kornelis
Photos by Celebrations From The Heart

In Memoriam

Paul Hester

Paul Hester, drummer for popular 1980s Australian rock band Crowded House, died this past March 25. The forty-six-year-old Hester was found in a park near his home in Melbourne, having apparently committed suicide.

Hester's drumming career involved several local bands prior to 1983, when he joined the group Split Enz in New Zealand, who'd had a hit in '80 with "I Got You." Later, he and singer Neil Finn left that group, enlisted bassist Nick Seymour, and founded Crowded House. That band went on to enjoy major success in the late 1980s and early '90s. They hit the international charts with songs like "Don't Dream It's Over" and "Weather With You."

Derrick Plourde

Derrick Plourde, a veteran drummer within the contemporary punk and indie-rock scenes, died this past March 30 as the result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. He was thirty-four.

Although not well known outside the punk community, Plourde was extremely influential within it. He was a founding member of melodic pop-punk quintet Lagwagon, drumming on their *Duh*, *Trashed* and *Hoss* albums. He was also a member of ska-punk group the Mad Caddies, and played on that band's 2001 album *Rock The Plank*. Over the years he was also a member of The Ataris, RKL, Jaws, and Threatend Hope. His most recent work was with indie rockers Bad Astronaut. In addition to his drumming skills, Plourde was a multi-instrumentalist and songwriter.

Jakson Spires

Southern rock drummer Jakson Spires died this past March 16 as the result of a brain aneurysm. He was in his mid-fifties.

As a founding member of Blackfoot, Jakson co-wrote their hits "Highway Song" and "Fly Away," among other Blackfoot material. From 1975 until the original band broke up in 1986, Blackfoot toured with such bands as The Who, Deep Purple, AC/DC, and ZZ Top. Groups like Def Leppard, Scorpions, and Iron Maiden opened for Blackfoot's headline tours.

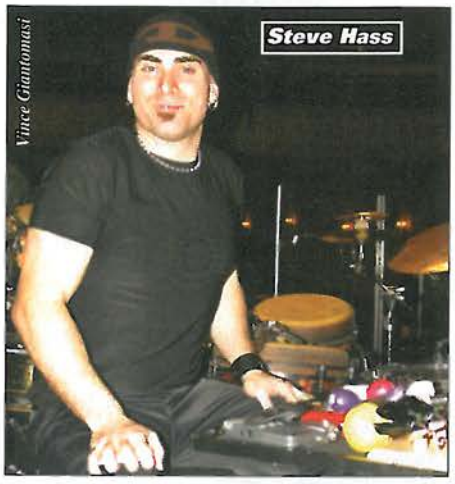
In addition to over a dozen records with Blackfoot, Jakson also performed on various studio sessions with Phil Lynott of Thin Lizzy, as well as blues legends Willie Dixon and Albert King. Most recently, Spires had been a member of The Southern Rock All-Stars. He had also joined the re-formed Blackfoot, who were preparing for a European tour at the time of his passing.

Kennard Johnson

Blues drummer Kennard Johnson died this past March 18, following a lengthy battle with diabetes. Johnson was a veteran of such blues and R&B acts as The James Cotton Band, Steve Miller, Tina Turner, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, and Kenny Neal. Johnson died at home just after completing his last tour with New England blues band Sweet Daddy Cool Breeze.

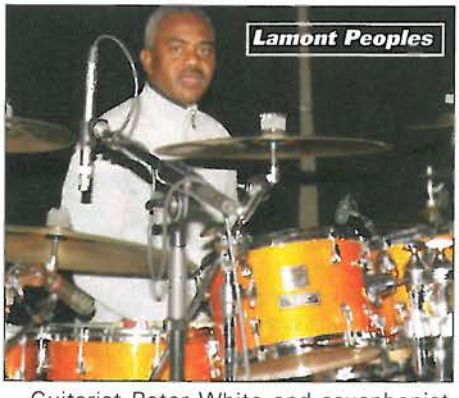
Former drum tech Jimi Pocius said of Kenny, "He was the deepest blues pocket player of all time. More than that, he was a gentle and knowledgeable spirit, with a ready smile and a love for most aspects of humanity."

Berks Jazz Festival



This year's Berks Jazz Festival, held March 11–20 in Reading, Pennsylvania, showcased an array of talented jazz and blues drummers. Among them was Steve Hass, who performed with Manhattan Transfer. Hass played an unusual drumkit that employed one djembe for the snare and another for the rack tom. The kit also included a floor tom, a kick drum, a side snare drum, bongos, and a timbale, along with cymbals and a table full of percussion instruments. "I really enjoy playing with Manhattan Transfer," Hass commented. "With this drumkit I can add a lot of color and be very creative."

Another highlight of the festival was Steve Smith & Buddy's Buddies, a group formed in tribute to the great Buddy Rich. The band featured the stellar drumming of Steve Smith.



Guitarist Peter White and saxophonist Jaared rocked the ballroom with a mesmerizing sound. Supporting their efforts was Lamont Peoples, whose powerful drum work drove the band to remarkable heights. For more information, go to www.berksjazzfest.com. **Vince Giantomasi**

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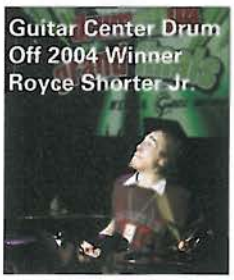
Pro-Mark has re-launched its Product Specialist online tutorial. The tutorial program and accompanying quiz have been redesigned, making them faster to get through and easier to navigate. To register, visit www.promark.com, click on "Products," and then click on "Get Certified."

Guitar Center's sixteenth Drum Off competition drew more than 3,000 drummers nationwide. The finals were held this past January at the Wiltern Theater in Los Angeles. Judges for the finals included **Slim Jim Phantom** (Stray Cats), **Josh Freese** (The Vandals), **Greg Errico** (Sly & The Family Stone), **Jeff Tortora** (Blue Man Group), and **Eric Moore II**, last year's Drum Off winner. Out of six talented finalists, the judges named twenty-one-year-old **Royce Shorter Jr.** of Seattle, Washington as the winner.



Shorter's prize package includes a Scion xB, as well as $2,500 to spend at any Guitar Center location. Sponsors for the Drum-Off included Sabian, Remo, Gretsch, Zildjian, Tama, and Pro-Mark.

Yamaha has provided nineteen Stage Custom Advantage drumkits to Berklee College of Music in Boston. The kits are currently in use within the student ensemble department at the college's Massachusetts Avenue location.

The faculty for the tenth annual **KoSA International Percussion Workshop**, to be held July 25–31 at Castleton State College, in Castleton, Vermont, will include more than thirty top drummers and percussionists. For faculty names and other information on the workshop, go to www.kosamusic.com. To register, contact Adventure Travel: (800) 540-9030, travel@advtravelagencymail.com.

WOMAD (World Of Music, Arts & Dance) and the Sri Lanka Tourist Board will present the WOMAD Sri Lanka Festival Of Drums this coming September 21–25. Indoor and outdoor concerts and workshops will be held in Colombo, with special acoustic performances in Kandy. Performers scheduled to appear include **Asere** (Cuba), **Billy Cobham** (USA), **Chemirani Zarb Trio** (Iran), **The Drummers Of Burundi**, **Joji Hirota & Taiko Drummers** (Japan), **The Bays** (UK), **The Dhol Foundation** (UK/India), and many more. Ticket details and festival updates are available at www.womad.org/srilanka.

Billy Cobham is scheduled to appear at the WOMAD Sri Lanka Festival Of Drums.

Who's Playing What

Korn frontman **Jonathan Davis** is also an avid drummer. He recently commissioned Brady Drums to make him a jarrah kit finished in an exotic Kakadu satin finish.

Sarah Tomek (Days Awake) and **Chris Donofrio** (Last Perfect Thing) are endorsing Bib Custom Drums.

Recent Vater artist signings include **Adam Topol** (Jack Johnson), **Chris Dave** (Me'Shell NdegéOcello), **Fred Eltringham** (Wallflowers), **Kevin "Figg" Figueiredo** (Population 1), **Makoto Izumitaini** (Gwen Stefani), **Gorden Campbell** (Jessica Simpson), **Kevin Holvig** (Rebecca St. James), **Aaron Stern** (Matchbook Romance), **Bob Bryar** (My Chemical Romance), **Bill Wysaske** (Michael Bublé), and **Lee Finkelstein** (independent). **Brann Dailor** (Mastodon), **Chris Johnson** (Anastacia), **Nate Young** (Anberlin), **Hugo Burnham** (Gang Of Four), **Bob Bryar** (My Chemical Romance), **Darren Pujalet** (Particle), **Jordan Plosky** (Ryan Cabrera), **Eric Jones** (Lindsay Lohan), **Lez Warner** (Erocktica), and **Jon Bucklew** (Copeland).

Studio and touring great **Ricky Lawson** and Megadeth's **Shawn Drove** are new Pearl drumset artists.

Keith Harris (Black Eyed Peas) and **Jean Paul Gaster** (Clutch) are now playing Meinl drumset percussion. **Jon Bucklew** (Copeland) is a new Meinl cymbal endorser.

Pat Pedrazza (From Satellite) and **Dick Gay** (Clint Black) are new Yamaha artists.

Tobias Ralph (24-7 Spyz, Broadway's *Movin' Out*) is now playing DW pedals and practicing on E-Pad practice pads.

Vater Percussion welcomes new artists New Zildjian Cymbal Artists include **Jon Theodore** (The Mars Volta), **Justin Foley** (Killswitch Engage), **Aaron Spears** (Usher), **Ali Jackson** (Wynton Marsalis), **Marcus Randolph** (Robert Randolph & The Family Band), **Dave King** (The Bad Plus), **Buddy Miles** (solo artist), **Ronnie Vannucci** (The Killers), **Paddy Boom** (Scissor Sisters), **Brian Viglione** (The Dresden Dolls), **Ringo Garza** (Los Lonely Boys), and **Longineau Parsons** (Yellowcard). **Atom Willard** (The Offspring) is playing Zildjian cymbals and drumsticks.

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Okay... Where's The Door?

Ken Lovelett of Mt. Tremper, New York is a composer, a performer, and the creator of the unusual percussion rig shown here. Called the Bellatope, it's a sculptural collage of conventional instruments, found objects, and unique pieces that Ken has built. This assemblage allows Ken to perform as a one-man percussion ensemble. The name is derived from words meaning "bell-tree" or "grove of bells."

Ken started constructing the Bellatope in 1969. "I was performing with acoustic guitar groups who didn't need a drummer," he says. "I started with just conga and hi-hat, then added a small bass drum. Over time, I added wood blocks, cowbells, triangles, and other conventional percussion instruments. To these, I added instruments of my own design. Soon I had collected so many instruments that I had to create collapsible aluminum trees to hold them all."

The arrangement of the Bellatope is derived from the shape of an amphitheater. The larger instruments are placed above and behind, to create a semi-solid backdrop and help reflect sound.

Ken has also experimented with electronic effects like phase shifters and digital delays. "I put my speakers about fifteen feet apart, with the Bellatope in the center," he explains. "I set the volume of the effects to match the acoustic volume of the Bellatope. The result is a whole, beautiful-sounding percussive orchestra."

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.

Send photo(s) to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.

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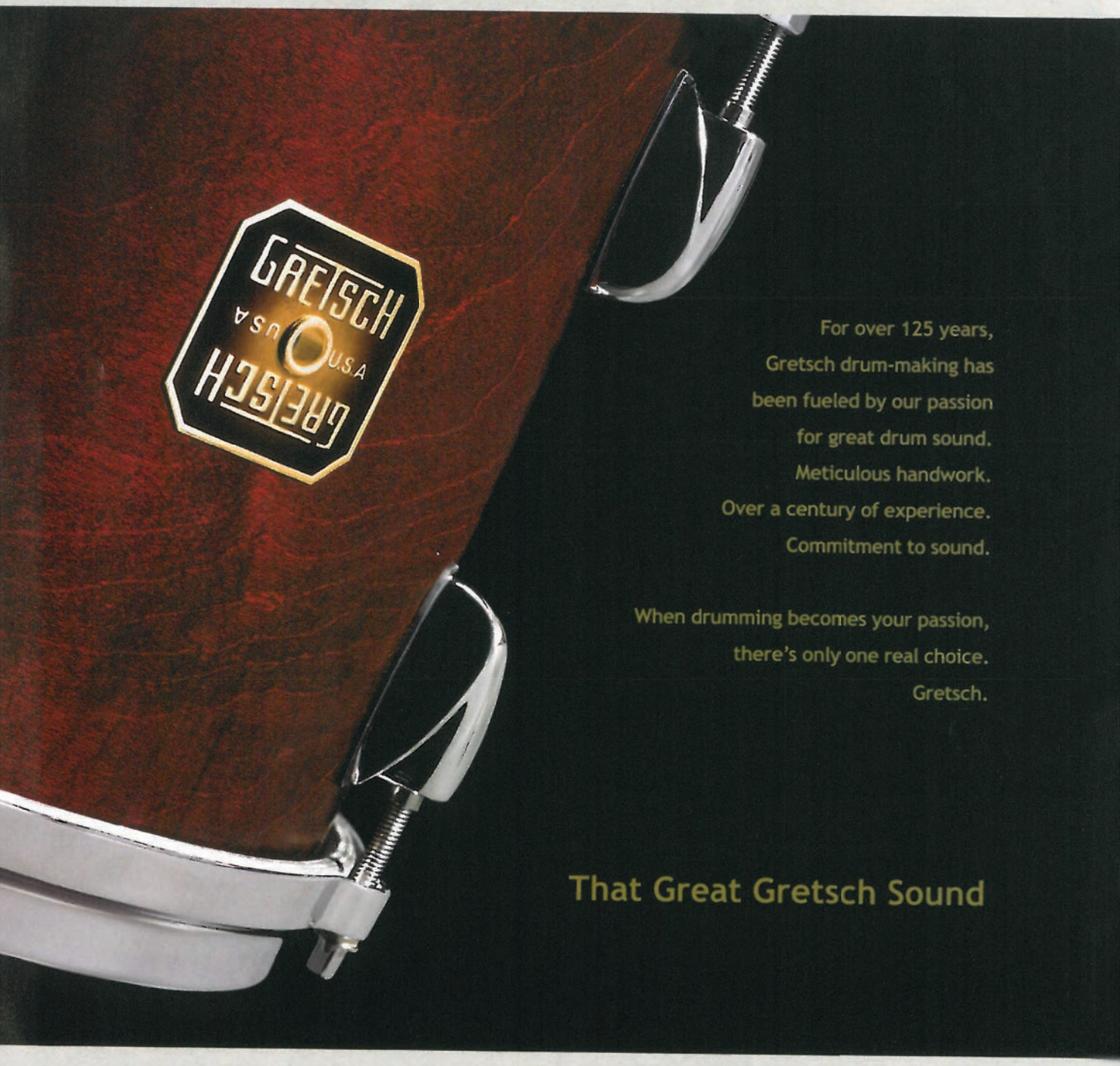

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